

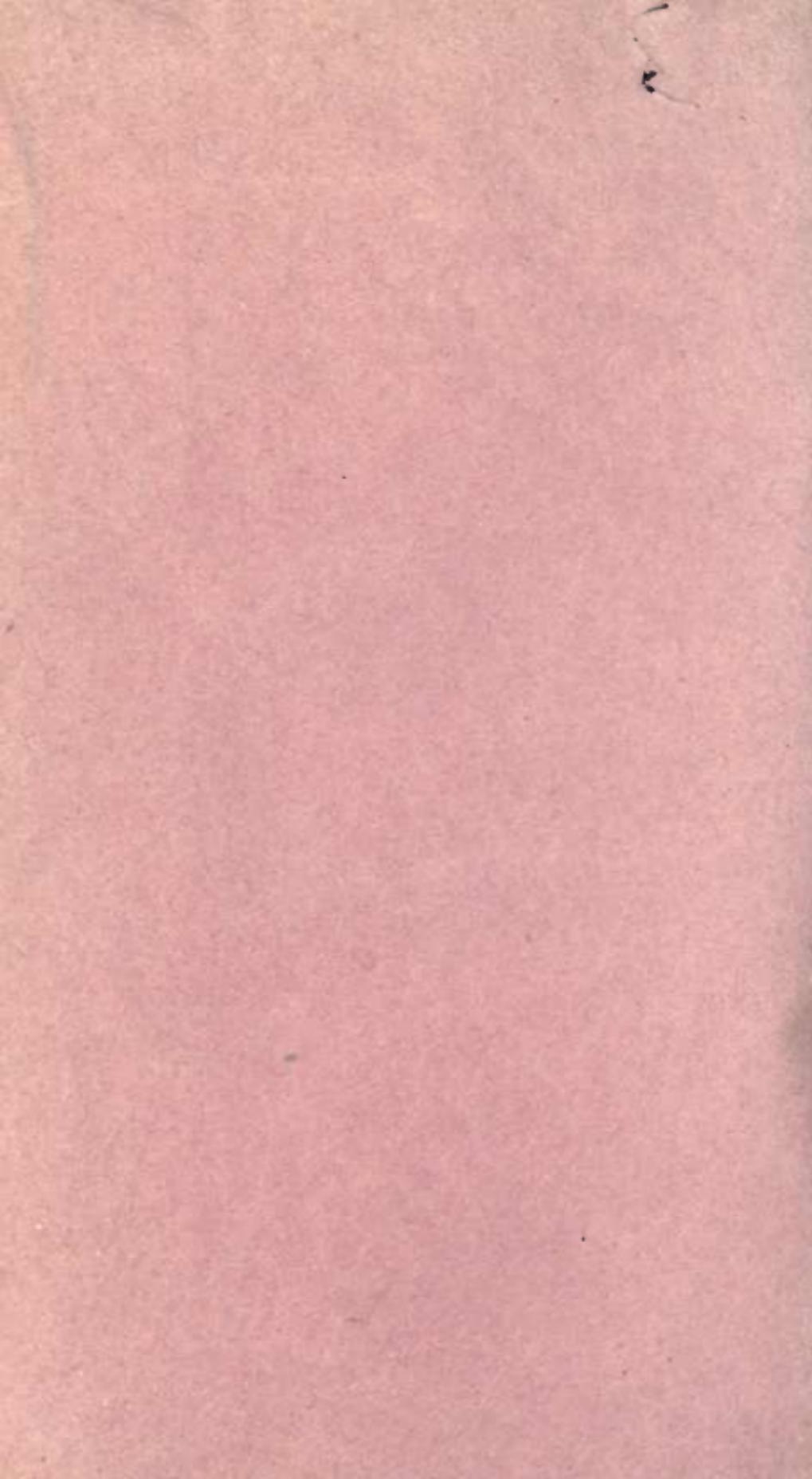


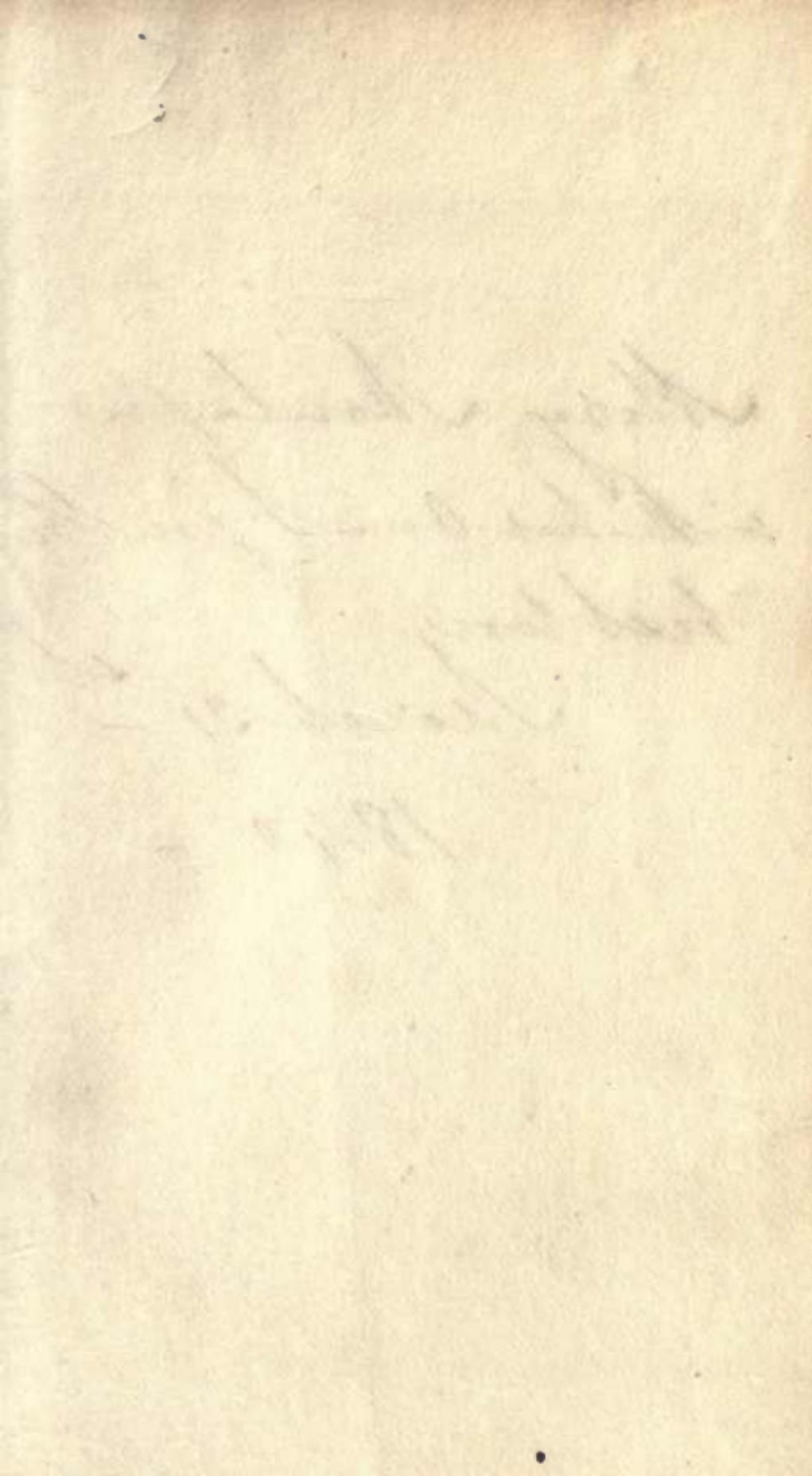
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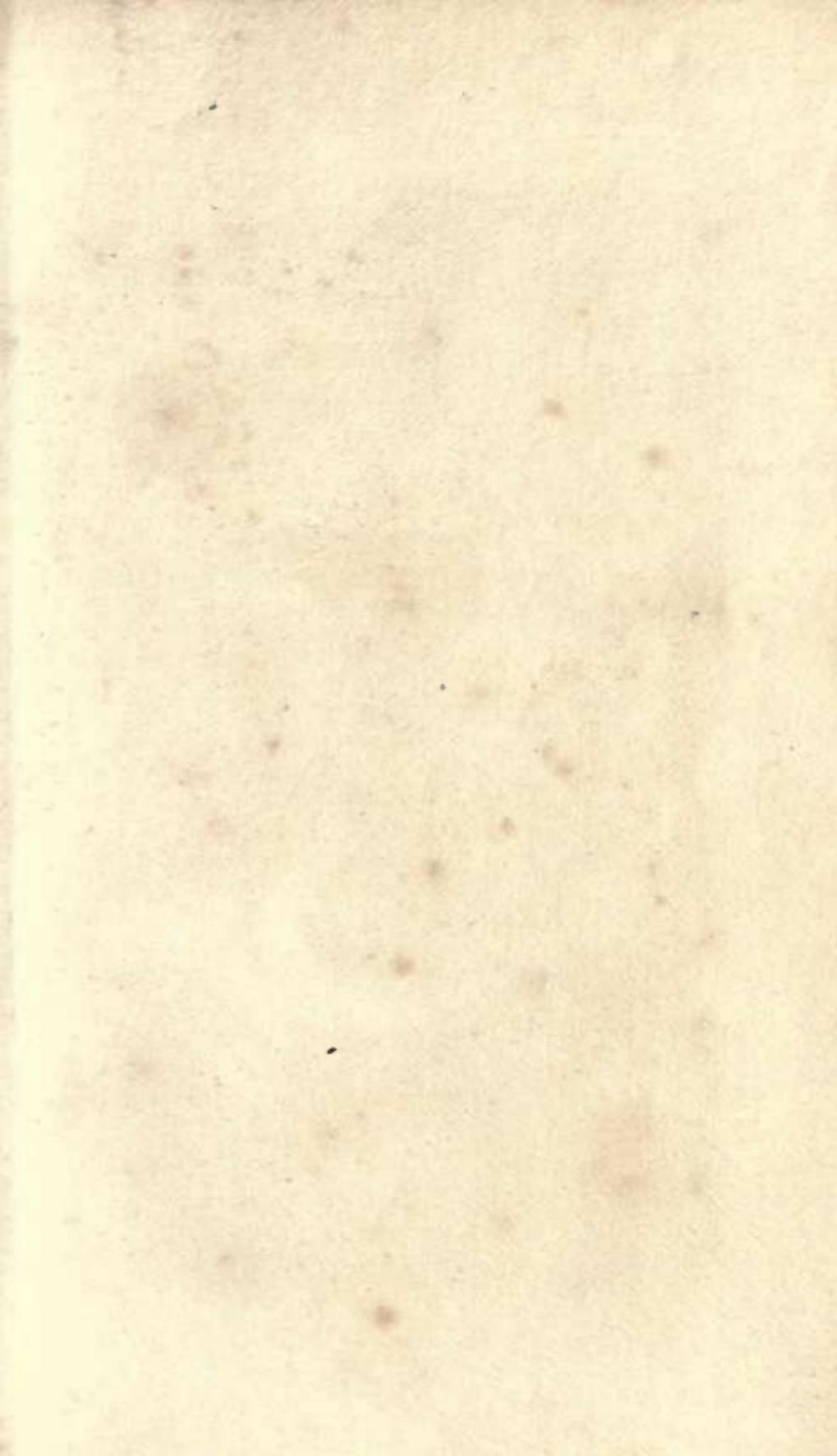
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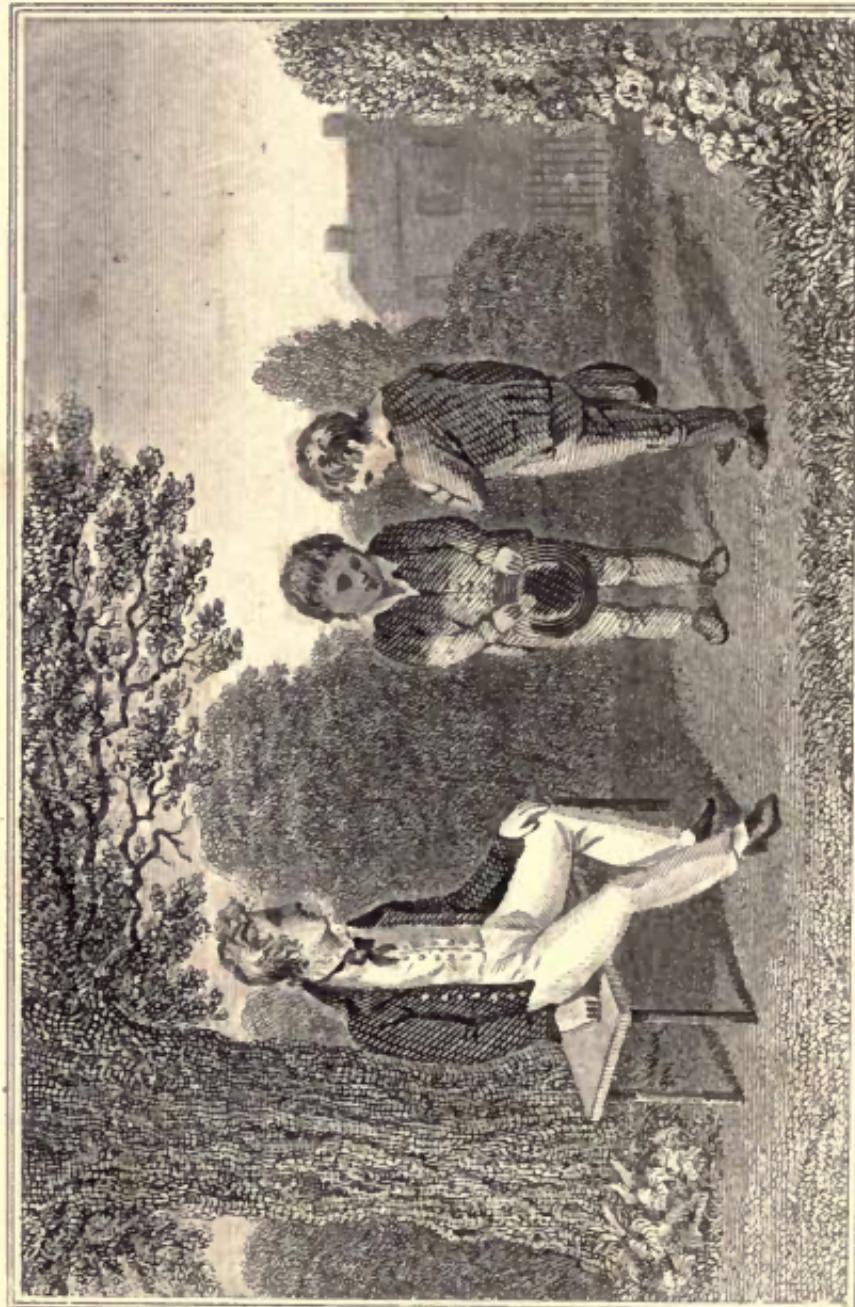


Mary Mountain  
with her Aunt Southern  
best love -

March 31<sup>st</sup>  
1840 -



# FRONTISPICE.



*But they hung down their Heads and looked frightened.*

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MARTEN  
AND HIS  
TWO LITTLE SCHOLARS  
AT A SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

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BY MRS. CAMERON,  
*Author of "The History of Margaret Whyte,"*  
*"The Two Lambs," &c. &c.*

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TENTH EDITION.

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## PREFACE.



THE following Chapters were originally written for the use of a little boy who was employed in lecturing a class of very young children in a Sunday-school. The little pupils were not advanced far, if at all, beyond their alphabet; but were taught Watts's First Catechism in the course of the school exercises by word of mouth: on which account the course of religious instruction in these Lectures was, as much as possible, conformed to that adopted by Dr. Watts; and frequently the very words of his Catechism are introduced. It was also part of the plan, that the young instructor should, at the close of his lecture, repeat aloud a

text of Scripture referring to the subject which had been under consideration, and this text was repeated five or six times by each child: and thus it was hoped, that every opportunity of this kind would add a text, tolerably well understood, to the little treasure of divine truths which the young ones were acquiring.

The children taught on this plan were the inhabitants of a mining neighbourhood, as will be readily seen: but it is hoped, that the religious instruction contained in these Lectures may not be unacceptable to little children in general.

THE  
**HISTORY**  
OF

*Marten and his Scholars.*

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**CHAPTER I.**

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"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."—*Gen. i. 27.*

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**T**HREE lived on the top of a high hill in the neighbourhood of Wellington, two boys, whose names were James Dainty and John Wylde. They did not live in the same house, but their little gardens were close together, and their houses not far from each other; so they often played together, for there were not any other houses near to them.

When these boys were very little, there was a Sunday-school opened near them; and

every Sunday a great many boys and girls were sent to the school, and James and John went too. The boys spent the morning, before they went to church, in learning to read; and in the afternoon, the master made them stand up and repeat the Catechism, or verses out of the Bible, which he or some one else explained to them.

In the evening, just as the master had made them stand up in their places, the clergyman and his little son came into the school; and the clergyman asked the master first one question about the children, and then another. "And who may these two little fellows be?" asked he, as he laid his hands upon the head of James Dainty and John Wylde; "you have no boys so small as these in the school."

"They are two little neighbours, who are come to school to-day for the first time," answered the master; "but I don't know what to do with them; for they are so small, and so much behind the rest, that they cannot learn with them in the Catechism or the Bible, so as to understand anything about it."

"Poor little lambs!" said the clergyman, for he was one who had a great love for little children, "it is a pity that none should feed their souls with the bread of life." Then

he turned to his son, and he said to him, "What do you think, Marten? would you undertake to teach these little boys, if I was to put them under your care?"

Then Marten answered, "I will try, papa: but what must I teach them?"

"The first thing you must teach them to-day," said the minister, "must be, who made them; and when they understand this, open your Bible and make them each repeat the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter of Genesis five times after you."

It was summer time, and very fine weather; so the minister told his son to take a little bench and put it on some grass under a tree in the master's garden, and sit down upon it, and put the two little boys to stand before him.

Then Marten took the little boys and led them into the garden, and he sat down under the tree. And first, he asked the children their names, and where they lived; but they hung down their heads, and looked frightened. So Marten took out of his pocket two little pictures of a church, which his father had given him the day before, and he said to them, "If you will speak to me, and answer the questions I ask you, I will give you each one of these pictures."

Then the little boys looked up, and did

not seem so much frightened. So Marten said to them, “Can you tell me who made you?”

*John.* I don’t know.

*James.* God made me, Sir.

*Marten.* That is right: and where does God live?

They could neither of them tell.

*Marten.* Look up to the pretty blue sky over your head—God lives above the sky, in a beautiful place called heaven. Now, James, can you tell me where God lives?

*James.* Above the blue sky.

*Marten.* And what is the place called where God lives?

*James.* Heaven, Sir.

*Marten.* And can you tell me, John, who made you?

*John.* God made me.

*Marten.* And where does God live?

*John.* Above the sky.

*Marten.* What is the place called where God lives?

*John.* I don’t know.

*Marten.* Tell him, James.

*James.* It is called heaven, John.

Then John repeated “heaven” after James.

*Marten.* God is very good, and we ought to love him very much, and thank him for making us: for God made you, and me, and

every body else. Can you tell me who did God make besides you and me?

*James.* Every body, Sir.

*Marten.* Is not God very good for making us?

*John.* Yes.

*Marten.* What return should we make to God?

*James.* Love him, Sir.

Then Marten said, " You have answered well." Afterwards he opened his Bible, and made each of the little boys repeat the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter of Genesis five times after him; and he bade them remember what he had taught them, and gave them their pictures, and sent them home.

CHAPTER II.

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"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."—*Psalm iv. 8.*

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THE next Sunday morning, James Dainty was called early by his mother; and she made him put on his clean clothes, and wash his face and hands with cold water, before his breakfast. And this did not take him long, because she had washed him thoroughly the night before with warm water and soap: so on Sunday morning he looked so clean and fresh, and his ears and neck were so white and delicate, and his hair so smooth and free from dust, that nobody would have thought he had been driving a jenny-carriage all the week. Mrs. Dainty used to say, "Sunday is the day on which God has chosen in a special manner to visit us poor creatures; and it is a sad way of welcoming his day by lying in bed, and getting up at last with dirty faces and dirty clothes."

When James was dressed, his mother bade him sit down on a little stool, and eat his basin of milk porridge; and then she wiped his face, and ordered him to go to school, and be a good boy.

"And, mother," said he, "shall I call for John Wylde?"

"If you will," answered his mother; "but mind you don't stay for him, if he is not ready."

"No, mother," said James.

"Stay a minute," cried James's sister, as she tied up two or three pinks and a rose with a bit of old-man and some sweetbriar, here's a nosegay for you; may be it will smell pleasant and fresh at school." So Mary fastened the nosegay in the button-hole of his jacket. "And mind," she added, "to be a good lad."

"Thank you, sister," said the little fellow, as he ran out at the door. James was soon at John Wylde's house, and calling out, "John, are you ready to go to school?"

John's mother peeped out her head at the door when she heard her son called. "Why, James, you are not going to school at this time of the morning are you?" said she, "my little lad has not had his breakfast."

"O, James, wait for me; I'll be ready

directly," cried John, running to the door in his shirt, his little hands, neck, and face, black with coal-dust. "Come, mother, wash me, and give me my breakfast."

"Come in, you young rogue," cried his mother.

"Will you stay for me, James?" repeated John, laughing, and never minding what his mother said to him, till she pulled him into the house, saying to James, "You had better go forward, my lad."

So James went to school and learned two lessons before John followed him: and the master called him a good boy for being so early.

The same evening, when the children had learned their lessons, Master Marten called his two little boys, and took them to the tree in the master's garden; and there he sat down on the little bench, and bade John and James stand before him. I shall now repeat what Marten said to them.

*Marten.* Do you remember, John, what I told you last Sunday about God?

*John.* Yes: you told us, that God made us.

*Marten.* And what else did I tell you, James?

*James.* You told us, Sir, that God lives above the sky, in a beautiful place called

heaven; and that God is very good; and that we must love him very much.

*Marten.* You have remembered very well. Now you can answer the questions which I asked you last Sunday, I have got some new ones to ask you. Is it day or night when the sun shines?

*John.* Day.

*Marten.* And what is it when the sun does not shine?

*James.* Night, Sir.

*Marten.* Can you see when it is night?

*John.* No.

*Marten.* When the pleasant sun is set, and the dark night comes, and you lie down to sleep, God watches over you just as your mother used to watch over you when you were little babies, and slept in a cradle. If God did not take care of you when you are asleep, you could not live till morning. Do you think you can take care of yourselves when you are asleep?

*James.* No, Sir.

*Marten.* Then all good little children should kneel down and ask God to take care of them before they go to sleep. Do you say your prayers every night?

*John and James.* Yes, Sir.

*Marten.* But do you say your prayers in a morning too?

*James.* Yes, Sir.

*Marten.* And do you say yours, John?

*John.* Sometimes.

*Marten.* It is very naughty not to say our prayers in a morning. Who did I tell you it is that takes care of us in the night?

*John.* God takes care of us.

*Marten.* And should not you thank God for watching over you all night, when you are asleep?

*John.* Yes.

*Marten.* You know that you cannot take care of yourselves in the night, because it is dark, and you cannot see; but it is quite as true, that you cannot take care of yourselves in the day, though it is light, and the sun shines. If God was not to take care of you in the day, you could not live any more than you could live in the night without his care. Besides, God sends us all the good things we have; he is always doing us good: he sends us our breakfast, and dinner, and our supper, and our houses, and our warm clothes, and our beds, and our kind parents. So every morning, as soon as we awake, we ought to kneel down and thank God for having taken care of us all night, and then we ought to ask him to take care of us, and give us every thing that is good for us all

day. Now, can you tell me why we should say our prayers in a morning?

*John.* I don't know.

*James.* Because God has taken care of us all night.

*Marten.* Yes, we should thank God for having taken care of us all night. And what should we ask God to do for us all day?

*James.* We should ask him to take care of us still.

*Marten.* Why should we ask God to take care of us?

*James.* Because we cannot take care of ourselves.

*Marten.* And what should we ask God to give us all day?

*James.* Our breakfast, and dinner, and supper.

*Marten.* Yes, we should ask God to give us every thing we want.

Marten then commended James for answering so well, and he tried to make John answer the questions again; and afterwards he made them both repeat the eighth verse of the fourth Psalm five times after him: and when they had finished repeating it, it was time for them to go home.

CHAPTER III.

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"From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—*2 Tim.* iii. 15.

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THE next Sunday morning, when James Dainty was dressed, and was sitting at the door of his parents' clean house eating his breakfast, his father, who was dressed ready for church in his Sunday coat and clean blue woollen stockings, drew his chair beside the child; and he reached down a large Bible, which had been given him by his mother, and in which all his children's ages and names were written, and laying the book slowly upon his knees, "My little lad," said he, "what book is this?"

"Why, father," answered the child, "is it not your great Bible, which grandmother gave you?"

"True, my lad: but do you know whose book it is?—who wrote it?"

"No, father."

"Why, it is God's book: he gave it to us, and in it he tells us every thing that we must do in order to get to heaven."

"Does it, father? I should like to read it."

"That is what I send you to school for, my lad, that you may learn to read the Bible, and know what it means too. When I was a little one, my poor mother used to take great delight in teaching me all she knew: and before she died she gave me this book, and she said, 'Son, this book has been my riches all my life long: it was my pleasure when I was a child; it was my guide when I came to woman's estate; and it is all my comfort now. Mind, son, that you give heed to teach it well to your little ones.'"

"Father," said James, "don't I remember grandmother? did not she walk to church with that gold-headed stick which stands by your bed-side? and did not she stop to rest very often?"

"Yes, my lad, she walked to church, or I might better say, crept there, the very Sunday before she died. She loved God's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth; but she is in God's house above now."

William Dainty wiped his eyes with the

back of his hand. "And, father," said James, "was not our little Bell called after grandmother?"

"Well, I believe she was," replied William; "but that is not to our purpose now. I was going to tell you, that you must take very great pains at school to learn to read, and likewise you must strive to get a Bible, or a Testament, may be, at first, of your own."

"My master says," answered James, "that he thinks, before Christmas, I may get into the Testament; but I sha'n't have a Testament of my own to take home when I do read."

"Why, my lad, don't you bring home tickets every day when you go regular? and are not these tickets to go for books, or handkerchiefs, or some such thing as the minister is so kind as to give you? Now, I dare say, if you would ask your little master, he would speak for you, that when the prizes are given away, you might have a Testament instead of any thing else."

"I will speak this evening about it," answered James.

"But mind you speak civilly," said William; "and, you know, you are not to be in a hurry, but wait the master's time for the book."

"Yes, father."

"But that is not all, my lad. I was going to say that you young ones have a great privilege, which they had not in my time, of being instructed by their betters. So if you would understand your Bible when you have got it, you must take good heed to what your little master says: for he must know a great deal more than you do, if he minds his father at all; for he takes great delight in teaching him, as I have heard tell, besides the pattern he sets him."

"Father," said Mary, coming up to them, "the clock will strike just now."

"You must be going then, James," said William.

"But not before your face is wiped," added Mary, smiling; "and turn round, and let me brush your coat."

Then little James said good-bye to his father, and thanked his sister for brushing his coat, and away he ran to school. He minded his lessons very well all that day; and as soon as evening service was over, and the children were gone back to school, he made haste to his little master Marten, who was sitting on the bench in the garden, and he took out of his pocket a small bag, in which he kept his tickets, and he said, "If you please, Sir, I have got three tickets,

and my father says, you will be so good as to give me a prize for my tickets. May I have a Testament?"

Marten smiled, and answered, "You must have a great many more tickets before you can have a prize."

"Must I, Sir?" said the child, rather sorrowfully; but after thinking a little while, he added, "But when I do have a prize, Sir, may it be a Testament?"

"Well," answered Marten, "I will speak to my papa about it; and I dare say he will let you have one, when you have tickets enough. But why do you want to have a Testament?"

*James.* Because father says it is God's book, and it will teach me the way to heaven.

*Marten.* You have answered right; and I was going this very evening to teach you a verse about the Bible, or the Scriptures, which means just the same as the Bible.

Then Marten turned to John, who had followed James into the garden, and he said, "John, why do we learn to read the Bible?"

John could not tell; and James answered, "That we may learn about God, Sir."

*Marten.* Yes; the Bible is the book which teaches us about God. You know,

the Sunday before last, I tried to make you understand that God made you, and me, and every body else; and last Sunday, I taught you that God is always taking care of us, by night and by day, and that he is always doing us good: and all this we learn in the Bible. Do you remember it?

*James.* Yes, Sir.

*Marten.* And what did I tell you that you ought to do for this good God?

*James.* You told us, Sir, that we ought to love him.

*Marten.* And if we love him, we ought to try to do every thing that will please him, and that he would like us to do. Do you know, James, what will please God?

*James.* No, Sir.

*Marten.* No; we cannot know what will please God, and what he has ordered us to do, without reading God's word, that is, the Bible.

Then Marten asked John a great many questions about the Bible, which I have not time to put down now; and then he made the little boys repeat five times the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy.

CHAPTER IV.  
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"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."—*Prov. xv. 3.*  
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JAMES and John were walking together the next Sunday afternoon to school; and the weather being fine, they went slowly along, looking first at one thing, and then at another, as children are apt to do. Now their road lay round the master's garden, and in one part of it there hung over the paling a bough of a fine apple tree, and on this bough there were several beautiful apples, of a fine rose colour, smelling very sweet, and quite fit to gather. "O! what beautiful apples!" said James; "I dare say they are quite ripe."

"Let's get them," answered John; "who'll know?"

"Get them!" repeated James, "why it would be very wicked."

*John.* Father would not beat me, if he was to know.

*James.* But my father would.

*John.* But he won't know. Besides, we won't get them all. There is one, two, three, four, five, six, seven; and we will only get three: I'll have two, and you shall have one, and who will miss them?—and nobody can see us!

*James.* Yes, God can see us: he can see at all times.

*John.* How do you know that?

*James.* Why, father has told me so very often.

*John.* Well, I don't care; I don't think he sees us now, so I'll have an apple.

Then John jumped up to reach a little branch, which was rather more out of sight than the other branches, and on it were three fine apples; and he pulled it down, and said, "Look, James! are not these beautiful apples? which will you have?"

Now James was a very wise little boy; for he knew that he loved apples very much, and he thought that if the apples came very near to him, he should not be able to help getting one of them: so when he saw that John was pulling the bough down, he set off and ran to school as hard as he could run.

Whether John stayed to get the apples or not James did not know, for he very soon followed him into the school; and a few

minutes afterwards, Master Marten came in and heard the little boys spell: for he said, he wanted to know how far James was got in his reading, and how long it was likely to be before he would be able to read in the Testament. The boys were very fond of having their lessons heard by Master Marten: for he was not like some little boys, who, when they are hearing other children say their lessons, are very cross, and scold, and order about them as if they were grown men; but he remembered how much trouble it gave his papa and mamma to teach him every day, and so he was very patient with his scholars on a Sunday.

When the little boys had done spelling, it was time for them to go to church; and when they were come from church, John and James were called to Master Marten, who was sitting on the bench under the tree in the master's garden, and they were both standing before him, before James knew whether John had taken the apples.

As soon as they were all in their places, Marten said, "I am going to talk to you to-day a little more about God. God is a spirit; and though we cannot see him, yet he sees and knows all things, and he can do all things. Do you know, James, what is meant by a spirit?"

*James.* No, Sir.

*Marten.* I am but a little boy, and so I cannot explain these things well: but then, too, you are very little boys, and can understand very little; but I will try to explain it as well as I can.—You, and I, and all other people, can only be in one place at a time. While we are standing in this garden we cannot be in our own houses, can we?

*James.* No, Sir.

*Marten.* But our thoughts can be in a great many places all at the same time, cannot they?

*James.* I don't know, Sir.

*Marten.* Why, can't you think of God, and of your father, and of your master's apple tree, all in the same moment?

John and James turned quite red, and did not answer till Marten repeated the question. Then James answered, "Yes, Sir."

*Marten.* Well, then, something like your being able to think of a great many places or things at once, so is a spirit able to be in a great many places at once. God is a spirit: he has not got a body like us, and so we cannot see him; but he is in every place at once. He sees every thing you do, and hears every thing you say, and knows every thing you think of: and if he is pleased with you, he can give you every

good thing; and if he is not pleased with you, he can strike you to hell.

Then Marten stopped, and asked John and James a great many questions about what he had been saying, to see if they understood it: and then he turned towards John, and looking very gravely at him for a few minutes, he said, "John, who saw you this evening, when you reached down the bough of the master's apple tree, and when you plucked three apples, and ate one of them, and put the other two in your pocket?"

John coloured, and trembled, and hung down his head; and James coloured too, and felt ashamed that he had stopped even for a minute, to look at the apples.

*Marten.* God saw you, John, and he ordered it so that I should see you too, for I was following you at a little distance; and what you did was displeasing to God, and he marked it down in his book, just as you will see me mark it down in my book; and some day or other he will call you to account for it, as my papa will too in a little time.

Then Marten took out of his pocket a little pocket-book, and a pencil; and he put down what John had done, and said he should shew it his papa: for he must

not punish him himself, only he took out of his pocket the two apples, one of which was bitten, and returned them to the master. Then he talked a great deal to John about the wickedness of stealing, and where thieves go when they die; and then, having made both the boys repeat the third verse of the fifteenth chapter of Proverbs, he sent them away for the present.

CHAPTER V.  
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"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."—*Matt. xxii. 37.*

  
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I THINK we have all seen enough of little John Wylde, to know that he was not so wise or so good as James Dainty, and that he had not, like James, kind parents who would try to make him good, and who would punish him when he was naughty. So John was not ashamed to tell his father the next Saturday night, that he had gathered one of his master's apples, and he was afraid there would be a noise about it on Sunday; and he begged his parents not to send him to school the next day, for he said, "May be, if I don't go to school on Sunday, they will have forgot all about the apple against I go again."

"Poor little lad!" said John's mother, "it is a pity to punish thee for such a small

matter; it is but a child's fault to take an apple."

His father made no answer, but went on smoking a pipe he had in his mouth.

So on Sunday morning, as soon as John's mother awoke, she said to her husband, "As our little lad is at home to-day, suppose we borrow William Dainty's mule, and go to see brother, and take him those few early potatoes which he sent to ask us for last week."

"Well, do as you will," answered Tom Wylde; "but may be Dainty won't let his mule go, he is so over and above particular."

"Leave that to me," answered his wife.

"But mind, mother," said John, "you don't go to borrow it till James is gone to school, or else he'll tell the parson."

John's father and mother were scarcely dressed and got down stairs, when James came running to the door, and tapping smartly at it, cried out, "John, John, are you ready?"

"Go forward, my little lad," answered John's mother, "and John will soon be after you."

John's mother would have gone into a violent passion with any person who called her a liar, yet she did not mind telling a lie, whenever it suited her convenience, if, as she said, it was to do nobody any harm.

And now, when she had eaten her breakfast, and made herself a little clean and tidy, she went over to Mrs. Dainty's house. Mrs. Dainty had just finished dressing her three little ones, and had put on her clean gown and apron, and was sitting with the youngest child on her lap, waiting till the bell should ring for church. Their little dinner was got ready on the Saturday; so she never stayed at home to cook on the Sunday morning, but warmed up the dinner when she came home from church. And her husband was not like some men, who give more trouble than ordinary on a Sunday, let God be served or not. "Good morning, Mary," said John Wylde's mother, as she came into the house.

"And good morning to you, Sally," answered Mrs. Dainty.

"I am come to ask a little bit of a favour of you," said Mrs. Wylde.

"I am sure," answered Mrs. Dainty, "that I shall be glad to do any thing for you, as far as it lies in my power."

"Well, then," said Sally, "the thing I was come about was, to borrow your little mule for an hour or two this afternoon; I reckon your husband is not going to use it."

"No," replied Mary, "to be sure: but what has happened to take you out to-day?"

"A little matter of business," answered Sally.

"But must it be done to-day?" said Mary.

"I suppose it may be a week," answered Sally, "since my brother over yonder sent for those potatoes; and I am willing to oblige him with them, for he is very well to do in the world: and us poor folks can't afford to lose a day's work to be travelling across the country on week days."

All this while William Dainty, who had been reading in the chimney-corner, had kept quite silent; but now laying down his book, "Neighbour," said he, "I'll thank you to answer me one question—Where did those potatoes grow that you are going to take to your brother?"

*Sally.* Why, in the early border in our garden.

*William.* And how came they there?

*Sally.* How came they there! why, my master planted them.

*William.* Ay, he planted them; but what made them grow there?

*Sally.* Why, what simple questions you ask! what makes any thing grow, but rain and sunshine?

*William.* And who sends rain and sunshine?

*Sally.* It is the Lord's doing, to be sure.

But why do you stand catechising me here like a child of six years old?

*William.* Well, I will only ask thee one more question—If God's mercy and goodness gave you these potatoes, and not only them, but every other good thing you have, do you think the return you ought to make for his goodness is to break his laws?

"No, surely," answered Sally. "But what are you driving at now?"

"Why, my good neighbour," said William in a very kind manner, "it is only this—that, since God is so kind and good to us, we ought to serve him, and love him, and strive to do our duty to him, in every way in our power. We ought to fear to offend him, and we ought to delight to honour him, and praise him, and pray to him; and we ought to keep his day holy, and honour his church, and his ministers, and word."

"And do you think," said Sally, "it is such a great sin for poor folks, who have their bread to get, to spend a few hours on a Sunday on an errand or so?"

"Neighbour," replied William, "I had rather take the word of God than the word of man; and God hath said, *Him that honoureth me, I will honour.* Depend on it, if any one, for the sake of pleasing God, keeps himself on the Sabbath-day from

business or play, and spends that day as he ought, God will bless that man, and more than make up to him, in a thousand ways, all he may lose on his account."

"Well, I suppose," said Sally, turning short round, "I am not to have the mule; so good-bye to you."

CHAPTER VI.

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"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—*Matt.* xxii. 39.

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THOUGH Sally Wylde could not have William Dainty's mule, she borrowed a stout jack-ass from one of her neighbours, who cared little whether it rested on any day of the week or not. And the potatoes were thrown in a small bag across the poor donkey, and John was set to ride before them, and his father and mother walked by his side. They set out before ten o'clock, and soon after twelve, they reached the pleasant village of Wrockwardine.

It was the time of service, and there was nobody idling and wandering about: so Tom Wylde said to his wife, "It is a good step yet to your brother's, and I am very dry; come along with me to yonder public, and we'll have a draught. And do you, Jack, turn the ass to graze in the church-yard; but mind you have him out before

the folks come out of church: and stand by him, and mind you do not leave him."

"Very well, father," answered John.

Then John led the donkey into the church-yard, and he began to graze; for the grass was fresh and thick, and he had but little to eat at home. But John paid no regard to what his father and mother said to him, but left the donkey, and ran round the church till he found a high tomb-stone just below one of the windows; and here he stood peeping into the church. And while he was there, some pigs got out of the road into the church-yard, and came grunting to the place where the jack-ass was feeding; and somehow or other, the bag that was on his back getting loose, the pigs got at it, and ate many, and spoiled more, of the potatoes.

The pigs had been very busy many minutes with the potatoes, when little John perceived that the sermon was ended, and the congregation were beginning to sing their last hymn; so down he jumped from the tomb-stone, and ran to look for his donkey: and here he perceived what mischief was going on. Then looking round to see if his parents were coming, he drove away the pigs; and collecting all the remains of the potatoes, half of which at least were

bitten, he put them into the bag, and fastened them on the saddle again as well as he could, and jumped on the saddle himself.

This was hardly done, when his father and mother came in sight. "My lad," cried out his father, "make haste, and come out of the church-yard, for they will be out of church directly."

Now John was but a little fellow, and the poor donkey not much liking to leave the grass, he could not get him to stir. So his father, running up to him, gave the ass a great pull, and led him forwards: and this shaking the bag of potatoes, which John had not fastened on properly, it fell off, and out rolled the potatoes which the pigs had bitten.

"Why, what's the matter now?" said the father; "what has happened to these potatoes?"

"I don't know," answered John.

The father looked over the potatoes; and seeing what state they were in, he called to his wife, and bade her come forwards, crying out that his nice early potatoes were half eaten.

"Then it's those nasty pigs which have done it," answered his wife, running towards them; "I saw them just now coming out of the church-yard. You have been leaving

the jack-ass, you young rogue," said she to John.

"No, but I hav'n't, mother," answered the boy.

I will not repeat the lies which John told, and all the bad words which his parents used to him. At last his father began beating him very severely with the stick which he used for driving the donkey. John indeed deserved to be well beaten, for he had been a very wicked boy: but his parents were not angry with him because he had sinned against God, but because they were vexed at the loss of the potatoes. If they had really wished to make him good, they would have been very glad to have had him punished at school when he stole the apple. Now John's father was in such a passion, that he never remembered that he was in the church-yard, or that the people were beginning to come out of church; and he went on beating the child, who was crying very violently.

Many people collected round him, calling to him to stop. At last a very nice elderly lady, dressed in black, with a very pleasant countenance, came up to them. "My good man," said she, "what are you doing to that poor little fellow? Pray stop. Poor thing! I cannot bear to hear his screams."

"Young liar as he is!" answered the man, stopping, because he was almost out of breath, "he deserves to be killed."

"Oh! do not use such language," answered the lady. "The child should certainly be punished, if he has told you a lie; but this is not the place, nor the manner. Besides, my friend," she said, looking at the donkey and his bag, "if you set your child an example of breaking God's laws, how can you expect him to keep yours?"

The man by this time began to be frightened, lest he should get into some difficulty: so he set about fastening on his bag of potatoes once more, muttering however all the time to himself. The donkey too had broken his bridle; so that there was a good deal to be done before he could set out again.

The lady called little John to her; and when she could get him to stop crying, she took out of her pocket a little gilt book, and she read to him out of it these words: 'My duty to God is, to fear and honour him, to love and serve him, to pray to him and to praise him.' And she read, further: 'My duty to man is, to obey my parents, to speak the truth always, and to be honest and kind to all.' Then she said to him, "My little fellow, I shall perhaps never see you again, and I do not know who you are; but I feel

very sorry for you, and I wish to shew you, that if you go on in the way you are now in, you must certainly come to that dreadful place where wicked children go. Your conduct is very displeasing to God; for you are breaking the Sabbath, and it seems too that you are telling lies, and disobeying your parents. Those people, my little boy, who do not do their duty to their God, never do it to their fellow-creatures. If you had been serving God to-day at church, you would not have told this lie, nor disobeyed your parents; you would have learned too, in God's house, that if we would please God, we must be honest and kind to every body: and you would not have deceived your father, and your father would not have beaten you so severely." Then the lady said, "God bless you, poor child!" and giving the book to the little boy, she walked away to her own house.

Just then Tom Wylde called his little son, and lifted him once more on the donkey, and the party set out again, silent and sullen. And little John thought to himself—"I should have been better off if I had gone to school to-day, though I had got a whipping, for the master never beats us in a passion; and father has hurt me so, that I sha'n't be well of it I don't know how long."

CHAPTER VII.

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"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."—*Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.*

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AS Tom and Sally Wylde were returning home that night with their little boy and the ass, Sally said to Tom, "I shall call upon Mary Dainty, and shew her the cheese and the bacon which brother gave us; and then I wonder what will become of all her fine talking about keeping the Sabbath?" So, as they passed by William's house, they saw him, and his wife, and their five children, all sitting round the door, (for it was a fine summer evening,) and the eldest girl, Mary, was reading the Bible to them. And Sally

called out, as loud as she could, "So, you see we are come back safe and sound, and Joseph Price's jack-ass none the worse for his day's work. I hope your mule's well in his stable."

"Well, I am glad you are come back safe," answered William, taking no notice of Sally's speech about the mule.

Then Sally jumped off the ass, for she had got upon it, and she said, "I must come in, Mary, and shew you my luck. See this nice fat cheese which brother gave me; and look ye, this is as pretty rhoded bacon as ever was cut with a knife. I should not have got all this, William, if I had followed your advice, and stayed at home."

"May be not," answered William.

Sally untied the cloth which held her bacon and cheese, and laid them on Mary Dainty's round table, and then sitting down by it, she began to wipe her face with her handkerchief. John had been riding behind his mother, but he did not get off the donkey, for he did not wish to get into discourse with James; and the poor ass stood quietly mumbling a thistle, while Sally sat talking with Mary and William. Her husband, too, who had had a little too much of his brother-in-law's ale, followed her into the house, and sat down.

Now Sally was very proud of her bacon and cheese, and she wanted to vex her neighbour by talking of it. So she said again to Mary, "Well, what do you say to my day's work now? I am sure it ought to be every woman's work to founder for her family."

"Very true," answered Mary, "all the six days: but we must remember, we have something besides a body to provide for."

"It is very well for those as have nothing to do," said Sally, not regarding what Mary said, "to be reading and going to church on Sundays; but for us poor folks, our family is the main thing."

"Our children have souls, as well as us," repeated Mary.

"Well," said Tom, who had been listening to what his wife and Mary were talking about, "I never was one who liked these godly doings. It's my way of thinking, that a man who works all the week hard in the pit, as we do, should have a little pleasure on a Sunday. In the summer time there is something to be done with the cocks; and in winter, a jug of ale by the fire-side is better sport than sitting half a day in a cold church."

"That would be all very true," answered William Dainty, "if there was no such

thing as another world. You remember my mother, Tom?"

"Yes," answered Tom, "I reckon I do."

"Well," said William, "when I was a youngster, a bit older than our little lads here, a set of wild chaps ticed me, one Sunday evening, to go a-nutting with them. And when we had got fairly into the wood, they all sat down in a ring, I among them; and they brought out two young cocks, which they had been carrying, though I did not know of it, for they had hid them in bags, and they set them to fight: and then they set on to swear and gamble. One young lad in particular, a fine lad to look at he was, fell out with another about a bet they had made; till from words they got to blows. We parted them with some trouble: but the last words we heard the lad say, and those with an oath, were, that he would never lay another wager with the other young fellow. And true enough his words were; for before the same hour the next day he was a corpse: the rope broke as he went down into the pit on the Monday morning, and he was dashed to pieces without having time to say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I helped to carry him to the grave, poor lad! His parents made great mourn over him. He lies at the foot of the yew

tree down by yonder little church. Well, the evening he was laid in the ground I told my mother how I had spent the last Sunday evening, for it lay heavy on my conscience.

“ ‘Son,’ said she, ‘repeat to me that answer which you learned in the little child’s catechism, beginning, Then I shall be a child of God.’

“ So I answered—‘ Then I shall be a child of God, and have God for my Father and Friend for ever.’

“ When I had answered, she said, ‘ My lad, this world is not our place of rest; we are pilgrims travelling to another world. In a few years every thing in this world will have come to an end for ever; death will soon put a close to all our pleasures as well as our sorrows. All that will then signify will be, whether we have served God, or whether we have served him not. Choose God’s service then, my boy; walk in his way, honour his day, go to his church, love his book; and he will be your Father and Friend for ever. He will take care of you all your life long; and when you die, he will take you to his kingdom, where you shall shine forth as the stars for ever and ever.’ ”

I do not know whether Tom and Sally listened to these words of William Dainty;

but, almost before he had done speaking, they got up, and Sally made haste to tie up her bacon and cheese. And then they wished William and Mary a good night, saying that it was time to be at home.

CHAPTER VIII.

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"Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."—*Psalm* xix. 11.

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A FEW days after this, as little John Wylde and James Dainty were coming home, for their fathers worked in the same pit together, and they often went down with them, James said to John, "I sha'n't go to work to-morrow, for father is going into Staffordshire, and I am to go with him."

"That's like your father," answered John, "going on a Friday, instead of a Sunday."

"Father says he would not travel on a Sunday, if he was to get all the ale by it that is drunk at our wake. And what did you get by travelling last Sunday?" said James.

"I did not get much," answered John, "but mother got bacon and cheese; and it was very nice cheese. We have toasted it for supper every night, and it is all gone now."

*James.* Master Marten talked to us so prettily about that answer in the little catechism—‘And what if you do not fear God, nor love him, nor seek to please him?’ And he made me repeat the answer, for, you know, you were not there to answer it; and he made me say it after him till I could say it perfect.

*John.* What was it?

*James.* ‘Then I shall be a wicked child, and the great God will be very angry with me.’ Then he told me how good God is, and how great he is, and that I ought to strive to please him in every thing I do. And he told me what a shocking thing it is to make God angry with us, and how he could strike us dead in a moment.

John made no answer, but began presently to whistle a song-tune.

Before daylight the next morning, William Dainty and his little boy set out on the mule for Staffordshire. They passed Tom and his little boy on their way to the pit. “Good morning, Tom,” says William; “we shall have a fine sun-rising.”

“Good morning to you,” answered Tom. “Why, there’s not another man in the country that would lose a day’s wages for nothing.”

“I don’t know that,” answered William;

"I have seen many a man sit half a day in the sunshine, playing, when he might have been earning his half-day's wages."

"Well, well," said Tom, who loved to drink half a day in the public-house as well as any one, "a man must have a little play now and then: but I reckon it is not for that you are going out now?"

"No, truly," answered William, "with my family, I can't afford much of that: but I have business, you know."

"Well, if I had been you," answered Tom, "I would have done my day's work to-day, and gone into Staffordshire on Sunday."

"Come, come," answered William, in a good-humoured way, "let's have fair play. Your friends take a day or two every fortnight from their work to please themselves: it is surely very hard if I may not take a day or two, once or twice a-year, from mine, to serve God. While I can help it, I will never take God's time to do my business in;—I mean his Sabbaths. God has blessed me, and taken care of me, from a little lad up to this very day, and, with his grace helping me, I never will forget him. And sure I am, that at his dying hour no man ever repented serving God. To my thinking, the best inheritance a father can leave

his children is, to set them a pattern of walking in God's ways."

Tom made no answer; so William Dainty wished him a good morning.

"Good-bye, John," said little James.

As John said good-bye in return, he thought to himself—"He'll have a pleasanter day of it than we had on Sunday."

Now I must not make my story too long: so I will not tell you what a fine day it was, and how the sun shone, and what a number of flowers little James got, and how many rabbits he counted on the common, and how the birds sang in the trees. William Dainty was going to receive a little money; for some time ago, he had worked for several months in Staffordshire. When he had received his money, and visited some of his old neighbours, he made bold to call upon the parson of the parish; for when he had lived in that country before, the parson had taken great notice of him; for he never missed church, and had the character of being sober, and never going to wakes or cock-fightings, or saying bad words. So the parson came out into the kitchen to speak to him, and made him eat and drink; and his wife and her little girls came out to speak to James. And before they went, the parson asked little James whether he

went to school, and what he learned there; and then he gave him a Testament.

Every body who has read the beginning of this story will guess better than I can tell them how glad James was to have a Testament. William Dainty took leave of his friends in good time, and set off again on his journey home.

Now, as they had had a good rest, they made haste, and they reached home between eight and nine. It was getting dusk, and they met none of their acquaintance on their way: but as soon as the mule's feet sounded at their own door, Mrs. Dainty and her daughter Mary ran out to receive them, first rejoicing, and then crying; so that William began to be puzzled. "Well, well," he said, "what is the matter now?"

"God has sent you out, in his great mercy," answered Mrs. Dainty, "praised and blessed be his name! Your pit has been on fire, and Tom Wylde is almost killed, and the little lad badly burned."

William Dainty stood for a few minutes like one fixed: he remembered his discourse with Tom that morning, and his eyes were filled with tears. Before he would do any thing to the mule, he took his little boy by the hand, and led him into the house; and he said to him, "Did any ever trust in the

Lord and was ashamed? O magnify his name with me, and let us bless the Lord for ever!" Then he made all his family kneel down; and taking his Prayer-Book, he read aloud out of it the general thanksgiving.

What account William heard from his wife about Tom Wylde and his little boy I shall not stay to put down now.

CHAPTER IX.

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"I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."—*Luke xii. 5.*

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WHEN William had heard all the particulars of the shocking accident which had happened to Tom Wylde and his little boy, he did not wait to rest himself or to eat any supper, but he went directly to call upon the poor man, and James begged that he might go with him.

When they got to the house, late as it was, they found the room down stairs filled with women: some were helping Sally to do such things as were wanted, (for she was going about the house like a distracted person,) but many were hindering rather than helping, and offering her vain comfort.

William walked through the midst of them quietly up stairs; and here he found the poor miserable man lying on his bed of death.

The fire had not much disfigured his face, but his body was in a wretched state, and his pain was violent. The child lay on a small bed near him. His face was so burned, and so tied up, that nobody could have known him. Both were groaning, but the child seemed the most impatient. Late as it was, the clergyman was sitting by the bed of the poor man.

William went up to Tom's bed, and he said, very kindly, "I am sorry to see thee here, my lad."

Tom looked at him very earnestly, but made no answer.

"Sit down, my friend," said the clergyman.

So he sat down, but for some minutes nobody spoke. James meanwhile walked to the bed of his little companion, and there he sat crying. At last, the clergyman said to William, "This is a bad season to have to learn one's religion."

"True, indeed," answered William: "but I hope the poor man is willing to learn it."

"That must be for God to know," answered the clergyman: "my business is to tell him the truth; I must leave the rest to God. But what I mean to say is this—the beginning of all religion, is the fear of God; and the end of it, is peace and joy in believ-

ing. But, when a man is full of pain, and his body is sinking fast into the grave, it seems a cruel thing to tell him, that his soul is in danger of hell: and many persons, because they do not like this, will give their friends vain hopes of comfort."

"Methinks," answered William, "this is cruel kindness."

"Very true," replied the clergymian; "and what I wish now to do, is to teach this our poor brother here, that God is as able to send his soul into the fire of hell, as to afflict his poor body, as he now sees fit to do; and I want to make him see and feel, that he has been a grievous sinner against God, and that he deserves not only his present pain, but the fire of hell. When I can bring him to this point, then shall I rejoice to hold up our merciful Saviour dying on the cross, and point out to him the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. But till I see him humble, I cannot call upon him to believe: there never was living faith without humility; nor can I call those his friends, who give him hope because he feels stupid, and has no sorrow for sin."

Having said these few words of caution to William Dainty, he turned to the poor man, and in the kindest manner tried to make him see what a sinner he was

Tom seemed attentive; but all he could say was now and then “No,” and “Yes.”

After he had talked to him as long as he judged it proper of his own alarming state, and pointed out to him in what way he might look for mercy from God, the clergyman knelt down and prayed by the bed-side of the poor man. Then he kindly took leave of him, with a promise to call upon him the next day; but after that hour Tom spoke no more.

William sat by him till his wife, who had undertaken to watch by him all night, came into the room; and then William was obliged to take his leave of him and return home, for he did not like to leave his family, as his wife was not with them.

Before sun-rise the next morning Tom breathed his last—his day of grace was closed. No more shall the bell sound in his ears, and call him to the house of God; no more shall he hear the warning voice of a minister of God; no more shall the example of a pious neighbour remind him of his duty; no more shall the funeral, as it goes by, say to him, “Prepare to die;” no more will his conscience, will the word of God, will the grace of the Holy Spirit, unwilling to leave him, strive with his rebellious heart.

Mary Dainty and a few other women

were by the bed-side of the poor man when he died, and his last groan sounded long in their ears. Whether he had paid any real attention to the words of the clergyman, and whether they had brought him in deep humility to the foot of his Saviour's cross, can never be known till that awful hour when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.

## CHAPTER X.

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"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"—*Jeremiah xvii. 9.*

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THE next morning, when William Dainty was gone to his work, and Mrs. Dainty had returned home, James asked his mother's leave to call upon little John; for his father did not take him with him that day into the pit. He was just setting out, when the clergyman and Master Marten passed by: and they stopped to ask Mrs. Dainty after poor Tom Wylde.

When she said he was dead, the clergyman looked very grave, but said nothing; so he and his little boy walked on to Tom Wylde's house, and James followed them.

The house was still all hurry and bustle down stairs. The clergyman spoke a few words to the widow—he advised her to keep herself more quiet, and spend this awful season in looking into her own heart. "God

sends us afflictions," said he, "to turn our hearts to him: but they will do us no good, if we only make them an occasion for hurry and bustle and worldly discourse."

Then he walked up stairs, and the two boys with him. On one bed was laid a clean white sheet, beneath which the shape of poor Tom's body, stretched out very long, was to be seen. Here the clergyman stopped, and the boys drew up close to him. They felt very cold, and stood quite silent. A woman who was sitting on the other side of the bed turned down the sheet, and they saw the sad and pale face of poor Tom. "Poor man!" said the clergyman, slowly; and then they turned away to little John's bed, and the woman covered the body with the sheet again: but the boys turned round from time to time to look at it. "My boy," said the clergyman to John, "you are in great pain, I fear."

The boy answered with a groan.

"But there is a place where there is worse pain than what you feel now. You have been badly burned; but the fire is gone out; it does not burn you now: but in the place I am talking of, the fire never goes out; night and day it burns; and it gives far worse pain than you feel now. That fire will burn you for ever, and never kill you,

never go out. You would think it very shocking to be as ill as you are now for a week, or a fortnight, or a month, and much more for a year: but the fire of hell burns for years and years. When thousands and ten thousands of years are passed, it will but be beginning. You have heard of this terrible place, my boy?" said the clergyman.

"Yes, Sir," answered John.

"And do you know, my boy, that you deserve to go to this place?—do you know that you have a very naughty heart?"

"No, Sir," replied John.

"Well," said the clergyman, "let us just recollect what has happened within a little time. Do you remember going to school the Sunday before last, and taking the schoolmaster's apples? Do you remember how, last Sunday, to save a punishment, you broke the Sabbath, and how you told lies to your father?" (for the story of all this had gone abroad from John's mother, who told every thing that happened in her family to all her neighbours.)

John seemed uneasy.

"My boy," said the clergyman, "I am not repeating all this to vex you, but for your own good, as I trust you will find, if you will attend to me a little longer. Do not you very often say bad words, and quar-

rel and fight with your brothers and sisters? And are not you greedy, and selfish, and idle? And don't you neglect your prayers, and live like a heathen, without any thought of God? I am telling you of all these things to make you know yourself, and to make you see that your heart is naughty; for if your heart had been good, you would never have fallen into all these sins. And now I beg of you, my child, to think a little to yourself, as you lie in your bed, and pray God to shew it you too, whether you have not been a naughty boy, and whether your heart is not naughty, and whether you have not done many things to make God angry with you. I will say a prayer by you, and then leave you to think of these things; and by and by I will come and see you again." Then they all knelt down, and the clergyman prayed: after which he and Marten went away; but little James stayed.

John lay for some time very uneasy, sometimes groaning, and turning and tossing about. At last, he said, "James, when the parson comes again, tell him that my heart is naughty, that I am a naughty boy—God has told me so."

"What do you mean?" said James: "how did God tell you?"

"Why," answered John, "when the par-

son was gone, I prayed to God to make me know if I had a naughty heart: and I think he has told me so; for I know it now, and I do deserve worse burning than this."

As he said these words, he laid his poor burned hand on the outside of the bed, all tied up with bandages, and covered with plaisters.

James was very glad when he heard John speak in this manner; and he said, "I will run down and tell the parson what you say."

He was just setting out, when he met his mother at the door, and he told her where he was going. So she stopped him, and said, "I am very thankful to hear this; but we will see how the little fellow is first, before you fetch the parson."

Now she had a basin of nice broth in her hand, which she thought he might like. So she sat down by his bed-side and offered it to him, and indeed fed him with it. He took it thankfully. And afterwards, seeming calm and disposed to sleep, Mrs. Dainty said to her son, "You shall leave him to have a little rest; and towards evening he may like to have some more talk with you."

CHAPTER XI.

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"If ye love me, keep my commandments."—*John* xiv. 15.

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THAT same evening, as James had stepped in again to look at John, who had had a nice sleep, and was much refreshed, little Marten came quietly into the room. He had a small basket of oranges in one hand, and a little book in the other. He looked at poor Wylde's bed, as he slowly passed it, and then sat down by little John. "Papa," he said, "has been sent for to see a poor man who is very ill, and I have got his leave to come and see you, and talk to you as well as I can."

Little John looked earnestly at James, as if he wished him to tell Master Marten what he had said to him in the morning.

So James said to Marten, "If you had not been so kind as to call, Sir, I should have come up to your house to let your papa know what John says. He says, that

God tells him he has got a naughty heart, and that he has been a very bad boy."

"O! how glad I am to hear that! how glad I am!" answered Marten. "I have been praying to God to make him know that; for I have been thinking of him ever since I saw him and his poor father this morning."

"I know something about having been a naughty boy," said John, "but I want to know more. Can you tell me as well as your papa, Sir?"

"No," answered Marten, "but I can tell you something: for papa and mamma teach me a great deal; and every Saturday night sister Lucy and I meet in papa's study, and he makes us sit quite still and think over all the naughty things we have done that week, and then we put them down in a book and say a prayer."

*John.* Please to tell me something, Master Marten, about it.

*Marten.* There is a little catechism which we have learned by heart, which says,—'To sin against God is, to do any thing that God forbids me, or not to do what God commands me.'

*John.* I do not know what those words mean.

*Marten.* I will tell you what they mean,

as well as I can.—You know that God made us, and gave us every thing we have?

*John.* Yes.

*Marten.* Well then, ought we not to love him with all our hearts, in return for his goodness?

*John.* You taught us that under the tree in the master's garden.

*Marten.* And how should we shew our love to God?

John thought a little, but could not tell.

*Marten.* Why, how should you shew your love to me?

*John.* I think, by being civil and kind to you, if I could.

*Marten.* Well then, just the same, if you wished to please God, you would try to keep his commandments, and not to do any thing that he did not like.

*James.* That is just the same as those words you said just now.

*Marten.* So, John, sinning against God is, doing any thing that God forbids, or not doing what God commands; because, you see, if we do not try to please God, we can't really love him.

Marten stopped, and John was quite silent; so, after a little time, Marten went on—“Papa has often told me, that the way

to know whether I have a naughty heart, is not to ask myself, whether I do any one particular naughty thing, because perhaps the fear of being beaten may keep me from that; but to ask myself, whether I try to please God in all I do. Now, John, ask yourself, just as you lie in bed there—who have you been trying to please all your life, in all your thoughts, in all your words, and all your deeds?"

"Why, myself," cried John, quite loud. "I never thought about pleasing God till to-day."

Marten looked at James, and James looked at Marten.

"Then," said Marten; "I will tell you what some other answers in the Catechism say. Now you know you have been a naughty boy, you must be sorry for your sins, and pray to God to forgive you what is past, for the sake of Jesus Christ, and you must try to please him and serve him better; and I will let papa know what you say, and I am sure he will come to you, and he will tell you all those sweet things about the love of Jesus Christ to poor little sinful children like us, which I do so love to hear of."

While Marten had been talking to John he had laid his book down on the bed; and

James took it up, and seeing there were some prayers in it for little children, he asked Marten to say one.

So James and Marten knelt down, and Marten said a prayer, in a very slow and serious manner, and John joined in it with all his heart, as he lay in his bed.

When they had finished the prayer, John seemed tired; so Marten took one of the oranges and peeled it, and gave it to him. And as these three little boys sat together in the room of the poor dead man, they tasted a peace such as John had never felt, even at the wake, when he went to see the bull-bait with his pocket full of halfpence.

## CHAPTER XII.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*John iii. 16.*

THE next morning, about ten o'clock, the clergyman with his little son called upon poor John. When he came to the bed-side, he said, "Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell therein!"

The words sounded very pleasant to the little boy, for he had passed a very unquiet night: he had lain awake a great deal, and he had been almost all the time alone; for the doctor would not suffer any one to sleep in his bed, on account of making his fever worse. So his mother and the children had made up a bed down stairs, where they were to lie till the funeral was over. There was indeed a woman sitting up, but she was chiefly down stairs by the fire; though she came up now and then to look at the corpse

and snuff a small candle which burned dimly on a little round table placed by the bed of the dead man.

Here, alone, with the poor corpse, John had passed the night; and as he lay hot and feverish on his bed, he thought of many things quite new to him. His own heart talked to him, and told him more and more plainly of the naughty things he had done: and it was to him as the voice of God. He remembered how he had got up in a morning, and lain down in his bed at night, without once thinking of God, though indeed he had hurried over a few words of prayer with his lips. He remembered the many wicked words he had said, and the lies he had told; how he had quarrelled with his brothers and sisters, and beaten them, and how he had disobeyed his parents:—how he had, from the hour he could first remember to the time he was laid on his bed, tried only to please himself. He knew that it was God who had, as it were, rocked him in his arms of love ever since the hour of his birth, and who had given him every blessing he enjoyed; and yet he had made no return of love. He had hated his service, taken his name in vain, and even when he had been in his house, and heard his Bible read, or said his name in his prayers, his heart had been far

away from him. He had loved any thing in the world better than God.

When John thought of all this, he said to himself, "There is no place but hell fit for me." He repeated to himself, "Fire, everlasting fire—fire worse than this burning." Then he lay for some time in a great terror, till he remembered some words Marten had said in his prayer the evening before—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

These words seemed pleasant to him, and he went on repeating them from time to time, till his poor body being quite tired, and the early light peeping cheerfully in at his window, he fell asleep, and rested for some hours. He had only been awake long enough to drink a dish of warm tea, when the clergyman called, as I have just said. He sat down by the bed-side, and took the little fellow's hand. "You seem very hot," said he.

"O, Sir!" answered John, "God has told me all about it now."

"What has he told you?" said the clergyman.

"I asked Master Marten to tell you that I was a naughty boy yesterday, but I am a very naughty boy now: God told it me last night, when I lay all alone here with only poor father. O, Sir, God has loved me all

my life long, and I have never loved him. O, Sir! I shall go to hell, and I shall never come out of it again."

" My poor boy, God has indeed always loved you, and you have indeed been a naughty, a very naughty boy, and deserved to go to hell, and never to come out. You cannot feel this too much. But, wicked as you are, God's love is greater than your wickedness, yes, and my wickedness, and the wickedness of the whole world. If it was not for this, we should all be lost, for ever lost. Repeat this verse after me—*God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

" I cannot tell what you mean, Sir," said the child, looking earnestly at him.

" My boy," said the clergyman, " you have heard of Jesus Christ?"

*John.* I have heard of him, but I do not know much about him.

*Clergyman.* What have you heard about him?

*John.* I have heard that he is the Son of God, and that he died on the cross to save sinners.

" Yes," said the clergyman, " to save sinners; to save naughty men and women, to

save naughty boys and girls, to save every body who knows that he has a very naughty heart, and is very very sorry for it, and will come to Jesus Christ to be saved."

"Oh, Sir! I know that I have a very very naughty heart: will Jesus Christ save me?"

"Yes," said the clergyman, "if you will come to him."

"Come to him!" answered the boy; "how can I do that? Where is he?"

*Clergyman.* He is here, he is every where: you cannot see him, but his arms of love are open to receive you. If you will pray to him, he will hear you, just as I hear you when you speak to me.

*John.* What shall I say to him?

*Clergyman.* I will kneel down by you, and tell you what words to say.

Then the clergyman knelt down, and repeated these words: "O Lord Jesus Christ, hear the prayer of a very wicked child, who deserves to be cast into everlasting fire in hell. He has sinned against thee ever since he was born; but now he hates his sins, and desires with his whole heart to be saved from them. He comes to thee to be forgiven for them, for the sake of that pain and sorrow which thou didst bear upon the cross for miserable sinners. Amen."

"O, Sir!" said the boy, "will Jesus Christ hear those words?"

*Clergyman.* He has heard them, my boy, if you have said them from your heart. While you lie here, say them again and again to yourself, and think that Jesus Christ loves you, and is standing by you, and hears you. Marten shall come again this evening, and I will mark some places in the Testament which he shall read to you about Jesus Christ; and to-morrow I will see you again.

Then the clergyman and Marten wished the little boy good-bye, and went home.

### CHAPTER XIII.

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"There is none righteous, no, not one."—*Rom. iii. 10.*

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MARTEN paid little John many visits while he was unable to leave his room, and he brought his Testament with him, and read such parts of it as his papa had marked for him. But before he began this pleasant employment, his papa explained to John how it was that his heart had become so naughty. He read to him, in the Book of Genesis, the history of Adam and Eve being tempted by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit: and he made him understand, that by disobeying God in this way, sin came into their hearts, and into the hearts of all their children; so that every child is born with the seeds of wickedness in his heart. And he shewed to him, that we all of us deserve to go to hell, and that by nature we are not fit for any other place.

When John understood this more clearly

than he had done, (for people cannot fully understand it till they have looked a good while into themselves,) the clergyman said to him, “I think, now you see how wicked your heart is, and that you deserve to go to that dreadful place, where there is fire and brimstone for ever, you will learn to love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who so loved you as to come down from heaven to die upon the cross to save you from going to hell, and to give you a good heart, and prepare you for heaven.”

Marten read to John, every time he visited him, a little of the history of our Lord Jesus Christ. He began with that beautiful chapter which contains the account of the angels telling the shepherds of his birth; and he finished with the account of his rising again from the dead, and being received into heaven, and his promise to send the Holy Spirit into the hearts of his people.

John listened with great attention, and even cried when he heard about our Saviour’s sufferings on the cross. One day, he said to Marten, “I have often heard the name of Jesus Christ, but I did not know what he had done for us. Oh! what a wicked child have I been all my life! how good God has been not to strike me dead!”

But I ought here to mention, that a few days after the clergyman first came to visit little John, his poor father was buried. John, as he lay in his bed, saw him wrapped in his shroud and laid in his coffin. Nose-gays of old-man and thyme, and other garden-flowers, were brought and scattered upon the poor man's body. He saw the coffin nailed down upon his poor pale face, and he saw his mother and brothers and sisters in black, and many of the neighbours crying and lamenting, and he heard the church-bell toll at a distance.

About four o'clock the funeral left the house, and all the bustle and hurry which had been in the house was at an end, and he thought that he was left quite alone, when he heard the step of some one on the stairs. He had hid his face in the sheets, and was crying bitterly, when he heard Mrs. Dainty's voice calling gently, "John, my boy, how are you?"

"Oh my poor father!" answered John, sobbing, "Oh my poor father!"

Mrs. Dainty wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron, and sitting down by John, she said, "Thank God, my child, who has given you time for repentance, and has in mercy made you see your wickedness. Think what you have deserved, and where

you would have gone, if God had cut you off, as he might have done, without even the time which your poor father had allowed him to call for mercy. But Jesus Christ has interceded with your heavenly Father, that you might be spared a little longer. He loves you better, my child, than I do this dear little baby that I have in my arms, and he has died on the cross for you, and borne all the punishment which you deserve for your sins: and if you will come to him, and believe in him, and love and serve him; when you die, he will send his angels to take you into a land of everlasting rest, where no evil shall happen to you, and where sin and sorrow shall never come. O my child! how can you think of the great love which Jesus Christ has for you, and not love him and turn to him! for there never was love like his."

John dried up his tears, as he listened to Mrs. Dainty; and she stayed with him till his mother and the rest of the family returned from the funeral, and then she went home.

Mrs. Wylde with some of her neighbours came up stairs, and she broke out afresh into loud and violent cries. But I fear her grief was not of a sort to do her good; for she did not kneel down and pray, or sit

down quietly to read, but in a little while she went below again to some of her husband's relations, who, having come from a distance, had sat down to some ale, and little John was soon left alone.

Many of the things which Mrs. Dainty, as well as the clergyman and Marten, had said to him, still sounded very pleasantly in his ears; but the sad thought that his poor father had gone unprepared into eternity greatly troubled him. The night was stormy, and as the wind swept over the wood and rocked the window, he often awoke in a fright, and fancied his father was still lying on the next bed, and that he had just heard his dying groan. And then he would call upon his Saviour to have mercy upon him, and to prepare him for his dying hour. And that verse which he had often heard the children at school repeat out of the hymn-book came into his mind—

‘LORD, at thy foot ashamed I lie,  
Upward I dare not look:  
Pardon my sins before I die,  
And blot them from thy book.’

CHAPTER XIV.

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"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."—*John xv. 5.*

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IN a little while, John was recovered enough to get up out of his bed; and, soon afterwards, to walk about in the little garden. As soon as he was able to walk so far, he came down to the clergyman's house; for he had desired him to do so. John was a great while walking so far; and James came with him, that he might rest upon his arm if he was tired.

Marten was playing about the garden with his sister Lucy when he saw the little boys coming. So he ran to meet them, and took them into the kitchen; and the maid, who was sewing near the fire, set them chairs to sit down upon.

Then Marten ran to tell his papa, who was writing in the parlour, that John was

come. So he put his pen in his ink, and carefully closing the book in which he was writing, he got up and followed his little boy, who ran before him into the kitchen. "Well, John," said he, as he laid his hand on the child's head, "I am glad to see you out again. God has been very good to you to give you such a fine recovery; and I hope in a little time you will be able to return to school and to work again."

"Yes," replied John, "I long to be about again as I used to be. It is better to be well and work hard, than to be sick and do nothing."

"The thoughts of this, I hope, will make you thankful," answered the clergyman, "when you return to work, and make you willing to do any thing that is set you. And I would have you consider, my lad, that God has given you, as it were, a new life, and that when you return to your old work and your old companions, you must lead quite a different life to what you used to do."

"O!" cried John, "I think I can never fall into my old sins again, they do look so very ugly."

"What did you find out, my lad," said the clergyman, looking rather gravely, "what did you find out about your

own heart, as you lay in your bed, when you were sick?"

"I found out," said John, "that it was very naughty, and very full of sin."

"Yes, John: and was it not this naughty heart which has led you to sin against God through all your past life? And though it has pleased God to shew you your sins, and, I trust, to wash them away in the blood of Jesus Christ; and though I trust he is watering with his grace the seeds of a new life which have been sown in your heart; yet still your naughty nature is not plucked up, nor ever will be quite, till your soul leaves your body. So when you return into temptation again among wicked children, you will find this naughty heart of yours continually trying to bring you into your old wicked habits again. And that wicked being, Satan, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, will try, too, to make you naughty again, that he may get you into his kingdom to torment you."

"Then must I be a naughty boy always?" said John.

"Heaven forbid that you should!" answered the clergyman; "Heaven forbid anything so shocking! But what I mean to say is this, that you must not deceive your-

self, and fancy that your naughty heart is gone, and that you can be good whenever you like: you cannot of yourself be good any more now than you could before you were ill."

"I know," answered John, "that I must pray to God to make me good."

*Clergyman.* But many people pray, and are not the better for it, because they do not pray rightly. How did you pray when you were in your bed, and asked God to forgive you for Jesus Christ's sake?

*John.* I do not know what you mean, Sir?

*Clergyman.* Why, my child, when you asked God to forgive you for Jesus Christ's sake, did you not feel that you were a very wicked child, and that if God did not forgive you, you would certainly go to hell? and did not that make you pray with all your heart?

*John.* Yes, Sir, indeed it did.

*Clergyman.* Well then, just the same—if you know that you have got a very naughty heart, and cannot be good of yourself; and if you want to be made good and like Jesus Christ, that you may go and live with him, shall you not pray with all your heart to God to make you good?

*John.* Yes, Sir.

*Clergyman.* But if you think that you can be good without God's help, you will not pray to him with all your heart?

*John.* To be sure not, Sir.

*Clergyman.* Well then, you see, my dear boy, that the first step to be taken in order to be good is to find out that you cannot be good of yourself, without God's help. And when you know this quite, then you will pray to God with all your heart, and very often, to make you good, for your Saviour's sake; and then God will hear you, and he will send into your heart his Holy Spirit to teach you what you ought to do, and to make you able to do his holy will; and to teach you to be humble and obedient, and patient and gentle. He will make you like Jesus Christ in your thoughts, and ways, and words; and so, when you die, you will go to live in his kingdom, with angels, and the souls of holy men, and women, and children. Do you think you understand this now, my boy?

"I think I do," answered John.

"Well," said the clergyman in a very kind way, "we will talk this over again another day. I think you seem a little tired with your long walk."

Just then the maid brought John a glass of warm elder wine and a biscuit; for Lucy

had begged her to fetch him something to eat.

So the clergyman wished John and James a pleasant walk home, and he took Lucy and Marten with him into the parlour.

When John was quite rested, and had drank his wine, he and James returned home. And they were both the better for what the clergyman had said, and I trust they will be so as long as they live.

CHAPTER XV.  

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"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."—  
*Rom. xiv. 10.*  

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ABOUT three weeks after this time, John Wylde told the clergyman that he was got so well that he begged he might be allowed to return to school the next Sunday. "And, Sir," said he, "I know that my name is down in the black book for stealing the master's apples; and, if you please, I should wish to be tried for it: for I know now that I was very naughty in running away that Sunday."

The clergyman was pleased with John's request, but did not say so to him. He only answered, "Well, my boy, it shall be as you wish." But he said to Marten, when John was gone, "I like to see such proofs as these that a person's religion is in their hearts. In this country, I see so many men and women who talk a great deal about re-

ligion, who yet never pay their honest debts, and do not mind what language they use, and are full of pride and high thoughts of themselves; and so many children who can read their Bible, and sing hymns, and who yet can quarrel, and lie, and cheat, and covet each other's things, and live just as those children do who never heard the name of Christ; that I am often grieved to think of the scandal they bring upon our holy faith. My dear Marten, I hope you will always remember, that if you wish to lead people to be religious, you must let them see that religion has made you meek, and humble, and industrious, and obedient, and honest. Then will people, seeing your good works, glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The next Sunday, John having got leave of his mother, went with James to school. The master had quite forgotten his apples, and received John very kindly: and his schoolfellows came about him, and asked him many questions; and all seemed glad to see him. At first, the sight of so many children, and the sound of their voices, made his head turn round; but after he had sat still a little while, he was able to come up and read. And the master was very much pleased to find that he could read

a little in the Testament, and knew the little catechism which the lady at Wrockwardine had given him; for he had spent almost all the long time he had been shut up in improving himself in reading and learning his catechism: and Marten had helped him; and William Dainty too, in an evening. How many things persons might learn when they are shut up in their houses by illness, if they would improve their time properly!

James too had got into the Testament; for, besides attending constantly at school, his father had taken pains with him whenever he could. So James and John were put still into the same class; and the master told them that when he had examined them thoroughly in the little catechism they had learned, he should give them each the church catechism to learn by heart; and they were very glad.

John was very much pleased at going to church again with his school-fellows; but it was not the first time that he had been at church since his illness; for as soon as he could walk at all he had gone to church. I am sorry to say that his mother did not take him there; though she went the first Sunday after the funeral, in her new black gown and bonnet; but William Dainty took

him: and then for the first time he felt how pleasant God's house is. When he said the prayers, or listened to the sermon and the lessons, or sung with the pretty organ, he did not feel like the same little boy which he used to be. He felt like the holy prophet David, who says in the psalms, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord. One day in thy courts is better than a thousand!*

But I must now return to John's trial, which was to take place the first Sunday evening of his going to school. So, when evening service was over, and the children were all returned to school, the clergyman asked the master for the black book; and then, sitting down on a high chair at the top of the school, he ordered the teachers to be placed on two benches on each side of him: and between them there was another bench placed which was opposite to him, and upon this he ordered John Wylde to sit down. The boy who was to be tried usually stood upon this bench; but poor John was still very weak, and his legs trembled when he was a little fatigued; so the clergyman bade him sit down: and when they were all in their places, he thus spoke

to the boys—"My children, when I open this book, it is in general that I may find out the fault of some naughty child, who, perhaps, has been trying to hide it, and that I may consider what punishment such a child deserves; but I now open this book for a different purpose, and if you will listen to me, I will tell you the history of it."

Then they all looked very earnestly at the clergyman, and after he had been silent for a few moments, he went on—"Some weeks ago, you may remember, that the little boy before you, John Wylde, was at this school, rosy and healthy, and as stout as any of you: but he will tell you himself, that at that time his body was more healthy and flourishing than his soul. I am sorry to say, that the last time he came to school he took, upon his way here, three apples which belonged to his master. This grievous sin was found out, and it was put down in the black book, that it might be considered the next Sunday.

"Now, when John knew that this was put down, and that he was likely to be punished for it, he did what I am sorry to say some other children in this school have also done—he determined to stay away from the school till he thought his offence would be forgotten. But, though he could

escape the rod of man, yet he could not escape from the hand of God. He did indeed stay away from school, and break the Sabbath of his God; but, before that week which he began in this wicked way was ended, he was visited with afflictions and sorrows, which, as you know all about them, I need not tell you of again. But in the midst of wrath our heavenly Father remembers mercy—the Son of God entreated for him, that he might be spared yet another year.

“ While John lay on his bed of pain and sickness, it pleased God to make him see his great wickedness all his life past, and to lead him to know his only Saviour Jesus Christ, who had died for him on the cross. And he has learned, I trust, to pray earnestly and daily for the help of the Holy Spirit to make him a good boy. And now that it has pleased God to make him well enough to return among you, it is his own wish to be called up to trial for the sin of which he was guilty the last Sunday he was at school.

“ But it is of no use to ask you, whether you think he committed the fault or not; for he owns it himself: and I shall not proceed to punish him. I only punish you, my dear children, to bring you to a know-

ledge of your sins, and to make you leave them off. But in this case, this work has been done by God himself.

"It is said in the Bible, that all our sins are written down in God's book; but I have good reason to hope, that Jesus Christ himself has blotted out all the past sins of little John with his precious blood. Let him take care not to sin again, lest bitter things should be written against him. But if he should be so unhappy as to fall into sin again, let him without delay run to Jesus Christ to be washed and be made clean again." Then the clergyman, taking a pen in his hand, added, "I will also blot out the account of this sad offence; and I trust I shall never see John's name again in this book.

"But, my dear children, I cannot let you go without begging you all to remember once more, that every thing we do wrong is written down in God's book, and that the blood of Jesus Christ alone can blot it out. Jesus Christ is ready and willing to wash away the sins of all those little children who come to him, and believe in him, and are desirous to please and obey him; and he will write down their names in his book of life. But now is the only time to come to him, now, while we are alive. The day of

grace will soon be past, and there is no repentance in the grave. O my children! if you come to Jesus Christ to believe in him and obey him, you will be happy for ever and ever: if you do not, you will be eternally miserable."

The clergyman then asked the master for a Bible, and read the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, from the eleventh verse to the end. Then he rose up, and the children walked back seriously to their seats. Poor little John several times shed tears, and the more thoughtful and steady of the boys seemed disposed to treat him with great kindness.

CHAPTER XVI.

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"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Philippians* iv. 13.

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EVERY body will wish to know how John Wylde behaved when he became stout enough to work at the pits and play as usual. He remembered what the clergyman had told him about not trusting to his own strength, and earnestly praying for the help of the Holy Spirit: and if he ever did forget it, he was sure to be made to see how very true the words of the clergyman were; because he always fell into something wrong again, when he trusted to himself, or was less careful in watching or praying, or reading his Bible. Whenever he was so happy as to work in the same pit with William Dainty, he always kept as near to him as he could; for next to having God for a friend, there is nothing so likely to keep a person out of sin as being with God's servants.

Sometimes he was very quiet, and nobody meddled with him, or said any thing to him; but at other times his work took him among very bad boys and girls, who laughed at him for being a methodist, as they called it: and they would play him all kinds of tricks, and try many ways to lead him into sin. At one time, he was tempted to feel very angry, and even to fight with them; and at another time, he was tempted to do as they did, and join with them in their wicked play. But I must tell you, that whenever he remembered to pray, he could always get over his temptations; for he could pray in his heart, whether he was driving the jenny-carriages, or whether he was down in the pit, or whether he was alone, or whether he was in the company of other boys and girls, he could say in his heart, "God be merciful to me a little sinful boy!" When he heard people swearing, or saw them fighting, or doing any other bad thing, and felt tempted to do the same, he could lift up his heart to God, and say, "Incline my heart to keep thy law."

When John came home in the evening, he found very little encouragement to be a good child. His poor mother never was a clean or tidy woman, and never tried to make the best of what she had. She was

always complaining how little pay she got from the parish, yet never made any good use of the money she had. When she had just received her pay, she would get a few pounds of fresh bacon from the shop, or some new cheese, and there would be something roasted or broiled for John's supper; and when the money was gone, he sometimes had hardly a bit of dry bread for his supper, though he had worked very hard. Yet John never complained, nor did he ever say, as some wicked boys do, that he would have it, and that he would go out of the country and work for himself, if his mother did not give him what he wanted. Indeed, if he had the best of suppers, he was not very comfortable at home. His mother was either out, or her house was filled with neighbours; and they were talking about all sorts of things, such as grown up men and women, as well as children, had better not hear of.

The house was always dirty, and the little children were sitting round the fire upon their feet, without shoes and stockings, and their hair long and uncombed, and their clothes all rags. But John loved his little brothers and sisters; and as he could now read very well, (for he never missed the Sunday-school,) he used to teach them their

letters, and some hymns, and verses out of the Bible. And he got them to leave off saying bad words, and taught them to say their prayers; and their mother indeed said, that when the fine weather came again, she would try to get them some clothes, and they should go to school with John on Sunday.

John used to beg his mother, in a very pretty way, to go to church: and now and then, if there was a new preacher, or if any of her neighbours were going, or she had a new bonnet on, she would go. But she had no idea of putting herself to any inconvenience, for the sake of going to pray to God, to beg his blessing, and to hear his words. She had always some excuse at hand, whenever any body talked to her about going to church. She had no clothes, for she did not like to go, unless she looked a little like her neighbours; or, the church was so cold; or she had a large family, and she must get the poor things some dinner on a Sunday, the only day she had them about her. And indeed she thought she did great things, if she spent all the Sunday in doing the things of this world, and then went into a neighbour's house at night where they were singing a hymn, or saying a prayer.

Though poor little John had so little comfort at his mother's house, yet he did not go over so often to William Dainty as he would have liked, for William Dainty's house was always clean and comfortable. If times were ever so hard, there was always a little comfortable supper ready for William and James when they came home, and a clean hearth; and the little ones were sitting round the fire with their knitting or their book, and they had clean good-humoured faces to welcome their father and their brother. And John might always have had a basin of broth with the children, and have stayed to hear William read the Bible with his young ones, before he went to bed; for William and Mary Dainty said, that poor little fatherless John should always be a child to them, while he was a good boy. But as John found that he could be of some use to his little brothers and sisters at home, he thought it was right to stay with them, even when his mother had nothing but a bit of dry bread at home. I wish all young people would think of this. In these days, children who go to Sunday-schools and day-schools are taught things which perhaps their poor parents never learned in their younger days; and if they would teach these things to their

little brothers and sisters at home, they might often lead them from the broad way of destruction which goes to hell into the narrow path of life that leads to heaven; and they might even do good to their parents.

There is a very pretty verse about this, which I would have little children learn by heart—*They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* (Daniel xii. 3.)

CHAPTER XVII.

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"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—*Psalm xc. 12.*

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THE clergyman's son, Master Marten, was allowed by his papa to visit the Sunday-school regularly: and James and John were still in his class, besides some other little boys who were put in because he had taken so much pains with the two first children that had been given him; and he read and talked to them every Sunday evening. James and John now indeed were able to understand many things more difficult to teach than those which Marten explained to them in the beginning of this book. But then Marten also was much improved himself, and took great pains in remembering what he was taught at home, that he might teach his little scholars the better on a Sunday: and whatever Marten taught his little boys that it was right for them to do, he

tried to set them a pattern of himself. If Marten talked to his children about obeying their parents, they would see him run the moment his father or mother called him, and obey their orders without a word of dispute. If he taught his scholars to be kind to their brothers and sisters, he was known to be the kindest brother himself to his sister Lucy and his little brother Henry. If he taught the children to pay respect to old people, they would hear the poorest old men and women in the parish praise Master Marten when he was not by for his civility and kindness and respect to them. When he told them how they must behave at church, they never saw any thing in him there that was unlike what he taught them. And if he told them the sin of bad language, no one ever heard a bad word come out of his lips. He never gave any one a rude name; but in the midst of his play he remembered to be kind and civil to every body: for Marten remembered that he was always in the presence of God.

Now Marten was not by nature better than other little boys: and he knew this well. He knew that his heart was by nature a very naughty one: but Marten lived in the habit of secret prayer. He knew that he could do nothing good himself; but

he had been taught how much our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ loves little children: and he came to him not only in a morning and evening, but many times in the day he would go by himself, for a few minutes perhaps, and pray to God, for our Saviour's sake, to make him a good child. He was like one of those sheep which our Saviour speaks of in the tenth chapter of St. John, when he says, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* And Marten will also be of the number of those of whom it is said in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelations, *These are they which follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth; these were redeemed from among men.* So little Marten set an example in his life of what was good and wise to his scholars. But he had another example to set them. It was the will of God, that he should teach his little scholars other lessons, which I shall now tell you about.

Little Marten was not a very strong child; he had frequently bad coughs, which confined him to the house, and he always looked pale and delicate, and was rather too tall for his age: so that his parents were obliged to be very careful of him. But when Marten was eleven years old, he was attacked with so violent a cough early in the winter,

that the doctor who was sent for thought that he could not live many days. He did however recover from this violent attack; but he was left in so weak a state, that it was feared he would never be quite well again. He was not allowed to walk out; though once or twice in the beginning of spring, when it was very fine and warm, he was drawn in a little carriage to church, and sometimes taken round the garden.

In a little while it began to be hoped, that in summer he might recover his strength; but the cold weather suddenly coming back, his cough returned, and the doctor forbade his going out of the house, and ordered him to be kept very quiet. If at any time his father and mother were not with him, or his kind nurse Sally, Lucy and Henry took care of him. Lucy would read to him, or smooth his cushion, (for he lay on a sofa in a sitting-room up stairs,) or give him his medicine; and Henry would peel his oranges for him, or do any thing else he might want; and Henry was a very quiet good-natured little boy, and he took care never to disturb him.

When Sunday came, and Marten heard the bells calling people to church, the tears would come into his eyes. And once he said to Lucy, "I should be very unhappy

indeed to lie here all Sunday, instead of going to God's house, if I did not think this illness was sent to make me more fit to go to God's house above: and that is my comfort."

The children in the Sunday-school were always enquiring about Master Marten, and when he would be able to return, especially John and James: indeed, every body in the parish was very kind in enquiring after him. And some of the children, hearing that Master Marten was very fond of having flowers in his rooms, were continually bringing him the first flowers their garden afforded—nosegays of daffodils, and polyanthus, and white violets, and crocuses, and snowdrops. Marten was pleased with these presents from his old scholars, and it amused him to see little Henry sorting them in a flower-pot which he had on a table by him to refresh him.

At last poor little Marten became so much worse, that there was very little hope of his recovery; and he himself felt so ill, that he believed he should never be able to visit the school again. So one Sunday, finding his cough rather more easy than usual, he begged his papa and mamma to give his little scholars leave to come and see him. They were almost afraid it would

be too much for him; but as he seemed very anxious about it, they said that John and James should come to him for a little while after evening service. The account of this visit I shall give in my next chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.  

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"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—*Eccles. xii. 1.*

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AS soon as evening service was over, James and John were told that they were to go and see Master Marten instead of returning to school.

Then they were very glad, and made haste to the clergyman's house. But when they got to the house, and the servant took them up stairs, and bade them step very gently and make no noise, they began to feel a little frightened. She opened the door of the sitting-room for them, and told them to walk in. Not very far from the fire, upon a sofa, lay Marten, his pale face leaning upon a cushion.

As soon as he saw the little boys, he raised himself up, and the colour came into his cheeks, and he said, "O, James! O,

John! how glad I am to see you!" Then turning to Lucy, who was sitting by him, he said, "Pray, Lucy, let them sit down by me."

Then Lucy got up and fetched her own stool and Henry's, and placed them by her brother, and she bade the two little boys sit down by him, and she seated herself on the sofa at Marten's feet, that she might be ready to do any thing for him he might want.

James and John had scarcely any thing to say to Marten at first, for their hearts felt very sad to see him look so ill. The young ones were all silent for some minutes. At last, Marten said, "I shall never come to see you again at school."

"O yes, I hope you will," answered both the little boys at once.

"No, I know I never shall," repeated Marten; "and this was one thing I wanted to tell you. There is something here," said he, putting his hand on his side, "which will never get well. I shall never walk with you any more to God's house, nor read his book, nor talk to you about his love to poor little sinful children; I shall be withered like the grass, which the mower cuts down with his scythe."

Then the little boys both began to cry;

and Lucy said, "O, brother, do not talk so."

"I did not mean to make you cry," answered Marten, "I only meant to tell you that I was going very soon to die. But there is nothing in that to make you unhappy; for I know that Jesus Christ has died for me, and he has prepared a mansion for me above the blue skies, and he has blotted out all my sins with his precious blood; and I shall be with him and see his glory. Those are very sweet thoughts; and when I lie here and think of these things, I feel more happy than I can tell you of. But when I am up in heaven with Jesus Christ, you know you will not see me in this world; and there are a few things I want to talk to you about, before I go away and nobody sees me any more."

Marten stopped for a few minutes as if he would give the little boys time to speak; but as they said nothing, he went on—"There is one thing in particular I want to talk to you about, which is, secret prayer. You know, we have all got naughty hearts,—very naughty hearts,—and we cannot do the least thing that is good of ourselves: but, you know, we are often so silly, and so fond of play, that we forget this, and then we get proud, and conceited,

and idle, and disobedient, and love our play better than God, and we get ashamed of being his servants; and if people laugh at us for trying to serve him, we learn to do all the silly things which they do. We have often talked about this under the tree in the master's garden, and, you know, we have said little prayers together; and you will think of this, perhaps, when I am quite gone. But I thought that I should like just to talk to you about it once more."

Here he stopped to take breath, and Lucy brought him some roasted apple in a saucer, and when he had eaten it he said, "Eternity will soon come: we must soon dwell in that lovely land, the garden of the Lord, where joy and gladness shall be found, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; or we must be cast into that dreadful place where the fire is not quenched night nor day, and the smoke of which goes up for ever. This dreadful place we all deserve to go to. We have been very naughty children, all of us. Our thoughts have been naughty, our words have been naughty, our actions have been naughty; but Jesus Christ can save us from that sad place, and take us to his own fair land. And he can blot out with his precious blood all the things which are written

against us in God's book, and he can send his Spirit into our hearts, and he can make us holy children, and carry us up at last to live with him, clothe us in white, and put crowns on our heads and harps in our hands. And Jesus Christ loves us very much, and he is ready to do all these things for us. O my dear sister! O John! O James! when I am gone, will you remember to pray to him? I mean, very often in a day. When you have done any thing naughty, pray to him to blot it out of his book; and when you want to do any thing naughty, pray to him to send his Spirit into your heart to make you good; and when any thing vexes you, pray to him to make you happy. I was a poor little sinful child, and Jesus Christ has loved me, and washed me from my sins, and I am going to live with him for ever and ever."

While Marten said these words, he laid his head back on his pillow, and raised his eyes up with so sweet and heavenly a look, that Lucy and the two boys could not help looking at him, and wishing that they were got, like him, almost to the gates of heaven. For a few minutes he seemed to have forgotten where he was, or to whom he was talking, and nobody spoke. At last, suddenly turning round to the boys, he took

their hands, and said farewell to each in a most kind and calm manner. And he mentioned the names of all the little boys in his class, and bade them give his love to them, and repeat to them what he had been saying. And he added, "Tell them that I hope we shall meet again in heaven, to serve God better than we have done here."

And now Lucy, seeing that her brother was quite spent, and that he hardly seemed to know what he was saying, said to John and James, "Marten shall now rest a little."

So they got up, and wiping away their tears, they took a last look of their dear little master, and went slowly and quietly out of the room. And Lucy, drawing the curtain to shut out the light, Marten closed his eyes, and fell into a calm and pleasant doze. His mamma came into the room to watch by him; and by the time tea was made, and his papa was returned from the school, he was rested enough to enjoy his company.

What Marten said to John and James, they did not forget, as we shall see by and by; and they did not forget to repeat to his little scholars what he had said: and many tears were shed by the children that evening.

CHAPTER XIX.

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"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."—*Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4.*

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VERY soon after this visit, little Marten got so much worse, that he could not get up at all from his bed, and the doctor said that he could not live much longer. He was become so thin, that nobody would have known him, except by his sweet smile and the kind pleasant look in his face. He was very weak, and often seemed too tired to speak; and sometimes, too, he was in great pain, and his cough extremely troublesome: but he was very patient, and never complained. He took all his medicine without saying a word, and was very thankful for every thing that was done for him: if he did not feel able to thank people, when they waited upon him, he would smile and look pleased at them.

One evening, after he awoke from a sleep that had refreshed him, he asked for his papa and mamma. They were both in the room; but he did not see them, because his curtain was drawn. So they came close to his bed, and stood one on each side of it. Then he stretched out his little thin hands to them, and he said, "Papa and mamma, will you forgive me? I have given you a great deal of trouble ever since I was a very small baby, and I have not minded what you have said to me, and I have not loved you as I ought to have done for all your kindness to me: will you forgive your little Marten before he goes away? I think that God has forgiven me, for Jesus Christ's sake, and that I shall be his child, and shall be taken up to heaven, and shall dwell there with God and Christ for ever."

The little fellow stopped for a few moments, and looked at both his parents. His mother could not speak, but covered her face with her handkerchief, for she could hardly help sobbing loud. "My child," said his papa, wiping away the tears from his eyes, "do not talk so: you have always been a dear dutiful child to us, and we bless God for ever giving you to us. Yes, my Marten, though we must now part for a little season, we shall meet to praise

God again together through a glorious eternity."

"Dear papa, dear mamma," answered the child, "I do love you very dearly: I thank you for all your kindness and love to me; but now I thank you, more than for any thing else, for teaching me to walk in the way of salvation, and for punishing me when I was a naughty boy."

Just at that minute, seeing Lucy with little Henry stepping softly up to the foot of the bed, he turned suddenly to them, "Dear Lucy," he said, "love papa and mamma, and be very dutiful and obedient to them, when your brother Marten is gone; and teach Henry to love them, and tell him how kind they were to me, and he must love them for me too."

Marten's mamma stooped down and kissed the dear little fellow's pale cheeks again and again; till his papa, fearing the child would be overcome, led her away into another room, and the two little ones with her, for they were sobbing loud.

Some hours after this, he thanked his nurse Sally, who had lived in the family some years, for all her kindness to him, and said, he feared he had often been very troublesome to her. Another time, when Lucy and Henry were with him, he said he

was very sorry he had ever quarrelled with them, and he hoped, for his sake, that they would learn to love each other more and more. Then he begged that, if his papa and mamma gave leave, some of his play-things might be sent to his cousins, to keep for his sake; and some money which he had been saving in a little bag to buy rewards for his scholars, might be laid out in little books, and given to them. One day also, when he was alone with his papa, (for he was careful to avoid saying any thing before his mamma and sister which he thought would vex them,) he mentioned a few things about his funeral, which, if his papa pleased, he should like to have done. These things were carefully attended to.

After this last discourse with his papa, he said to his nurse, with a sweet smile, "I have now done with this world; I have nothing to do but to go home." And so it was; after that day he was never able to say many words together. But as his weakness increased, his pain and cough left him. His heavenly Father appeared to be dealing very gently with him. His nurse several times said, that death seemed to be coming upon him as sleep had formerly done when he was a little infant, and she had rocked him in her arms.

When his last hour arrived, he had been in a doze for some time, and appeared very easy, though the approach of death was plain to all about him. His father, and mother, and Lucy, and Henry, and his nurse, were sitting by him, all quite silent for fear of disturbing him. He suddenly awoke, and looking round, he smiled sweetly: then raising his eyes, he was heard faintly to say, “O my Saviour! I am coming to be with thee for ever—for ever!” He then pointed to a Prayer-Book which lay on his pillow, which his papa frequently used with him: and all the family kneeling round the bed, his papa began to say aloud that beautiful prayer for a sick child, in the service for the visitation of the sick, which begins with—“O Almighty God and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death.”

The little fellow closed his eyes, as if in sleep, when he heard his papa’s voice: but before the prayer was ended, they were closed in death.

So sweetly, so calmly, did the soul of this dear child return to its Saviour and God, that though every body perceived he was gone by a gentle sigh, yet they felt such heavenly comfort in the assurance that he was removed to glory, that it seemed as if

their heavenly Father was with them comforting them. But if we would die the death of holy children, we must live their lives. I shall in my next chapter give some account of little Marten's funeral.

CHAPTER XX.

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"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."—*Daniel* xii. 3.

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LITTLE Marten's last requests were attended to, as far as was possible: his funeral was fixed for the Wednesday after his death. During the summer months there were lectures in the church every Wednesday; and Marten had begged, that, if it was possible, his earthly remains might be laid to rest on one of these days. The rector of the next parish, a very good man, who was Marten's godfather, was requested to perform the funeral service, and also to preach the sermon. Marten died on the 29th of April; and the first Wednesday in May was the day of his funeral. James and John, and four more of the elder boys in the school, (for the rest of his own class were too small,) were chosen for his bearers; and

each boy had a suit of dark grey cloth and a new hat given him to wear on the occasion. Marten's papa, and mamma, and Lucy, and Henry, followed as mourners; and likewise a first cousin of Marten's, of the name of Charles, a child whom he had always loved very much, and who had been sent for on the occasion; and also the son of Marten's god-father, a very good boy, who had been a companion of Marten's since they had been little infants.

The funeral set out from the clergyman's house about six o'clock. The clergyman who was to perform the service walked first; he had on his gown and cassock; and then followed the coffin, carried by the six little boys, with a black velvet pall thrown over it; then followed Marten's papa and mamma; and afterwards Lucy and Henry, hand in hand; and last, the two little boys I have mentioned. But I cannot tell you how many persons followed at a short distance: first, Marten's nurse, who cried as much as his mamma and sister, and the man-servant; and then one neighbour after another gathered together, some out of respect to his father and mother, and many out of love to the child. The schoolmaster had bidden all the Sunday-school children meet together in their Sunday-clothes, to shew their re-

spect to the memory of their dear little master, and he himself took them to church in good time, that they might be quietly seated before the funeral came in: and though there were so many following the procession, yet the church was half filled before it arrived. Many came together, as is always the case, to look about them: but the greater part came out of regard to Marten or his parents. The clergyman's house was almost a quarter of a mile from the church; and all the time the funeral was going along, the church-bell tolled slowly.

Poor little Marten's parents felt their hearts, at times, very sad; and then again they would remember that it was only the earthly part of their dear child that they were following. They would look up to the bright blue sky, (for it was a sweet sun-shiny evening,) and they would call to mind, that the soul of their beloved boy was far beyond those bright skies, in a land of calm and heavenly delight, dwelling with his Saviour, and seeing his glory. For while on earth he had been formed anew in his Saviour's image: and those who are made holy, shall, without doubt, be made happy.

They were now arrived at the door of the church—that holy house which Marten in his life-time had so dearly loved. The surplice

was put upon the clergyman, and he walked into the church, repeating the sentences which begin the burial service—‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ &c. When he had got into the desk, while the coffin was being placed in the middle of the aisle and the mourners were seating themselves round it, the organ struck up, and a hymn was sung, which I shall copy, as some little children might like to learn it by heart.

FAR from these narrow scenes of night,  
Unbounded glories rise,  
And realms of infinite delight,  
Unknown to mortal eyes.

Fair distant land!—could mortal eyes  
But half its joys explore,  
How would our spirits long to rise,  
And dwell on earth no more.

No cloud those blissful regions know,  
For ever bright and fair!  
For sin, the source of mortal woe,  
Can never enter there.

The glorious Monarch there displays  
His beams of wondrous grace:  
His happy subjects sing his praise,  
And bow before his face.

O may the heavenly prospect fire  
Our hearts with ardent love,  
Till wings of faith and strong desire  
Bear every thought above.

Prepare us, Lord, by grace divine,  
For thy bright courts on high;  
Then bid our spirits rise and join  
The chorus of the sky.

The usual evening service was read, only the chapter in the burial service was used instead of the second lesson; and then the sermon was preached. It was a very beautiful discourse, and drew tears from every eye. The text was—*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have I perfected praise.* The first part was an address to parents, and an earnest entreaty to them to devote their little ones betimes to that Saviour who has said, “*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*” The next part was addressed to children. The preacher explained to them, that though weak and helpless in themselves, as children, and though corrupt and evil, as the children of fallen parents, yet that they might shew forth their Saviour’s glory as much as the oldest persons. He spoke particularly of the character and behaviour of their dear departed brother. He told them that he was by nature no better, no wiser than they were; but that he had received all his strength from Christ—that almost as soon as he learned to walk by the help of his earthly parents, and to ask them

for every good thing he wanted in this world, he learned to walk in the heavenly way, by faith in his Saviour who had died for him, and to ask daily for strength to do the will of God. "You, my children, whom, young as he was, he taught in the Sunday-school, can remember how often he entreated you to pray in secret; and you who were his dearer and nearer friends, his brothers and sister and daily companions, can tell how it was his habit to pray daily and hourly. 'Not all his pleasure or his play could tempt him to forget' his God. It was a thing settled and fixed in his heart, that he could do nothing good of himself: therefore he never trusted to himself. And thus, in a measure, it might be said of him, as of Abraham, *He walked before God, and was perfect.* His Bible, his hour of secret prayer, the Sabbath-day, and house of God, were his chief delight while on earth; an hour or a day spent with his God were far sweeter to him than all those vain pleasures for which so many children give up their immortal souls. And God was with this child; in this babe he perfected his praise. He lived long enough among you to set you an example of a dutiful and obedient child, a kind and affectionate brother. He has taught you by his example to be gentle,

and kind, and patient, and humble, and self-denying, and industrious. He pointed the way, while with you, to his and your God—to his and your Saviour; and now he is gone before you to his Father's house. See that you follow where he has led. Refuse not to listen to his voice, as it were, still speaking to you from the grave."

But I must not repeat any more of this excellent sermon, for it will take up too much time. Parents and children, old and young, were in tears almost all the time that it lasted, and sometimes sobbing aloud.

After the sermon the ninetieth Psalm was sung; and then the body of little Marten was carried to its last quiet home. He was buried on the eastern side of the church-yard, close to the spot where a little infant sister of his had been laid to sleep several years before. Here he was put in the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust—but in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead. For as sure as seeds and roots of lovely flowers, after they have lain in the ground during the winter, shall spring up, clothed in fresh and lively green, when the winter is gone and past, and the time of the singing of birds is come; so surely shall the bodies of

all those persons who sleep in Jesus Christ come forth out of their grave in the morning of the resurrection clothed with glory and immortality.

After this account of little Marten's death, I have only a few words to say further about some of those friends whom he left behind, and whom he most loved.

And first, you will be glad to hear that his sister Lucy and his brother Henry are doing every thing in their power, like good and dutiful children, to make up to their parents the loss of their beloved brother. Henry becomes every day more like him; and their parents have the comfortable hope of seeing all their little ones once more together in that heavenly country—

Where blessed children, hand in hand,  
Circling their happy parents, stand.

I must not forget to say, that Lucy and Henry both visit the Sunday-school, and try to make themselves as useful as their departed brother.

Marten's cousin Charles, who had once been rather a thoughtless child; since Marten's death, and since he heard the beautiful sermon which was preached at his funeral, has not been like the same child that he

used to be. So that it may be truly said of little Marten—*The remembrance of the just smells sweet, and blossoms in the dust.*

John and James are growing up together in the fear of God, and walking in the house of God as friends. After the death of their dear little master, they used to meet at his grave (where a white stone was put up) whenever they had a convenient opportunity. It was very pleasant to them, when the wicked world about them was tempting them to sin, to get to this place of quiet, and think a little of that better place of rest which remains for the people of God. Here they would talk of the goodness of their Saviour, who had so blessed the instructions which this dear child had given them in his life-time; and here they would pray for grace to believe the promises of God, and to do his will on earth, that so they might be numbered among the saints in life everlasting.

John's mother is fallen into a very bad state of health, and is almost confined to her bed. John has persuaded her to keep herself more quiet from company, and to hear a little reading; and the clergyman often calls upon her and talks to her; and it is hoped she will be brought to some sense of her sin and danger.

John's eldest sister repays now the trouble he used to take with her. She has for several years attended the Sunday-school; and Lucy has been very kind to her. She is becoming a clean tidy girl, and makes her mother's house more comfortable than it ever was before. John is quite a father to the younger ones, and nearly maintains them by what he gets, for as yet they do not earn much.

William and Mary Dainty have the comfort of seeing all their children very promising. Their two eldest daughters are in good services; the other girls are at school; and the boys that are old enough work with William and James in the pit. The blessing of God is upon the family of William and Mary Dainty. In the times of sickness, or when work is bad, they have always met with friends—they have never known want; and the peace of God is with them.

William Dainty has sometimes seemed to lose a shilling or half-a-crown by keeping the Sabbath-day holy, and by going to church at times when there was business or errands to be done: but he has often said, "I never lost a sixpence in the way of pleasing God, but he has repaid it me, sooner or later, with a guinea.

"The reason why there is so much misery

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